The ART of Dragon® MAGAZINE

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On the cover — In *The Conflict* by Denis Beauvais, two dragons are locked in a struggle that mirrors the essential fantasy element of Good vs. Evil. This illustration appeared on the cover of DRAGON Magazine #111, first issue of the second ten years of the fantasy magazine.

Over—Treasure is being taken in *The Pillage of Tantlin*, cover #102, by Dean Morrissey. In this book we offer for your enjoyment the art treasures from DRAGON® Magazine's first ten years.

Dean
Morrissey
11-9-1984

The ART of Dragon® MAGAZINE

including all the cover art from the first ten years

Edited by
Jean Blashfield

Introduction by
Roger E. Moore,
Editor, DRAGON® Magazine

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TSR, Inc.
PRODUCTS OF YOUR IMAGINATION™

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INTRODUCTION

by Roger E. Moore,
Editor, DRAGON® Magazine

A dragon's life is a long one and not without its challenges. Like its namesake, DRAGON Magazine has had a long life (as gaming magazines measure it, anyway), and it has had more than its share of challenging moments. It started off on clumsy feet, grew and matured, and has managed to achieve some measure of greatness within its field. DRAGON Magazine (again, like its namesake) has also gathered a hoard of priceless treasures—and some of them are presented here in this book, *The Art of DRAGON Magazine*, for your enjoyment.

Jean Blashfield, the editor of this volume, asked me to write the introduction and talk about DRAGON Magazine. I have no lack of things to say about this magazine, but not all of it would be appropriate for an art book. I considered writing about how DRAGON Magazine has changed over the years, but that is obvious to anyone with even a partial collection of issues, or even just by glancing through this book at the way the covers have changed in ten years of publication. A discussion of art and fiction, and how they have been presented within the magazine, also seemed like a good idea. However, I cannot speak as either an art critic or a fiction expert. I know a few basics and I know what I like, but assignments for DRAGON Magazine in those fields are left to Roger Raupp and Patrick Lucien Price, respectively, each of whom has his area well in hand. I'm an editor, but technical details of editing are not exciting to read, despite the abstruse arguments that editors are prone to have ("Is the plural of 'medusa' supposed to be 'medusas' or 'medusae'?"). A more personal account of my part in the life of the dragon—DRAGON Magazine, that is—may do for a start.

I came to work with DRAGON Magazine because of a statistics test.

Graduate school had proved to be far more demanding and difficult than I had ever expected, but I had been able to handle everything at the University of Louisville except the second-semester statistics course for psychology majors. I had failed the first two tests and was in mortal agony over the outcome of the third, which I also flunked. I was supposed to be good at math, and that final failure broke my spirit. While we were driving home for the night, my wife Georgia patiently listened to my despair, then said, "Why don't you call Kim Mohan and see if you can work for DRAGON Magazine?" It was a crazy sort of idea, but given the alternative of retaking the statistics course, I was ready to latch on to any way out. I picked up the phone when we got home and dialed TSR, Inc.

I had been writing game-related articles for DRAGON Magazine for several years, since my Army days in West Germany. Bored with the routine and with plenty of free time on my hands, I wrote a few short pieces and mailed them to the editors—and was stunned when some of them were accepted. My first article appeared in issue #33, January 1980: a write-up of Frosts, a race of mischievous snow pixies. The trickle of articles I wrote grew to a flood within a year, and in time Kim gave me the title of "contributing editor," which I was proud to share with a fellow gaming writer from Canada named Ed Greenwood. My writing suffered after I left the Army and went to grad school, though I managed to finish a few pieces I was proud of (particularly the Astral plane article in issue #67, which was based in part on my research into the physical effects of weightlessness during space missions).

As I waited for Kim to answer his phone, I hoped my record as contributing editor would make my request seem a little less silly. To my astonishment, Kim was pleased to hear that I wanted to work for the magazine. Within a couple of weeks, I had a plane ticket to Chicago, and I was on my way.

It wasn't until I got into the main terminal at Chicago's O'Hare Airport that it occurred to me that I had no idea what Kim Mohan looked like. I had spoken with him fairly often by phone, but that was no help now. Kim found me anyway because I was the only one off the plane who wasn't met by anyone else. The look of total confusion on my face must have helped, too.

I recall thinking when Kim hailed me that I didn't know editors could be so tall. Kim was thick-bearded, soft-spoken, and had an air of casual dignity. He wore a suit coat and tie as if born to it. I was a goofy, hyper-talkative gamer in uncomfortable church clothes who had somehow entered Valhalla, and all I could think of was how to avoid sounding like a nerd whenever I opened my mouth. I was desperate to do my best. Kim drove me to Lake Geneva, showed me around, and apparently decided that I would do. I had made it.

In May 1983, the offices of the magazines had just been moved into the main TSR building on Sheridan Springs Road, from their former location in a vermin-infested green house next to a Pizza Hut restaurant. Though no one on the magazine staff had regrets about the move, the staff had not been integrated into the workings of the rest of the company, either. Periodicals ran a tight ship separate from every other division. As a result, I became well acquainted with the periodicals staff, but barely knew anyone else's name, though the books, games, and graphic-arts departments were on the same floor.

A few magazine staffers in particular stand out in my memory. I was put in an office with Marilyn Favaro, who had an enigmatic smile and was on the editorial and production staffs of DRAGON Magazine and AMAZING® Stories. Across the hall were the cubical quarters of Patrick Price, then assistant editor for AMAZING Stories and on the editorial staffs of STRATEGY & TACTICS® and DRAGON magazines; he would periodically wail in disbelief and horror while reading fiction submissions. A little way up the hall was the cube

of Roger Raupp, an artist and keyliner for DRAGON® Magazine, and a graphics contributor to POLYHEDRON™ Newszine, ARES™ Magazine, and STRATEGY & TACTICS® Magazine. Roger seemed to have a lot of Viking blood, and had developed an enthusiastic taste for tormenting editors of any sort. ("Let's see if centrifugal force really *does* work on editors!" he shouted once, seizing my arm and spinning me around at high speed.) Mary Kirchoff (the "Bucker Queen") sat across from Roger Raupp; she was the editor of POLYHEDRON Newszine and helped with proofing for DRAGON Magazine. Eileen Lucas, around the corner, was production coordinator for STRATEGY & TACTICS and ARES Magazines. Eileen seemed to be the only sane and stable one among us, but I didn't know her very well then. In short, everyone helped out on everyone else's magazine—a practice which has continued without interruption to this day.

I don't recall a lot about my first six weeks with the magazine division, except that I read a lot of manuscripts and began learning the basic rudiments of editing. Unlike other staff members, I had had no formal editorial training before being hired on; I simply wrote a lot. As it was, I was probably one of the very last people TSR ever hired who got there simply by calling up and asking for a job.

The peace did not last long. Changes were coming, and the first of them hit in July, with a massive lay-off of employees. The second mass lay-off came shortly after that, and three more followed in the next two years. TSR, Inc., had gravely overextended itself and was in deep trouble. I was briefly co-editor of ARES Magazine with Mary Kirchoff, until that publication was merged with DRAGON Magazine and eventually disappeared even as a special science-fiction section. POLYHEDRON Newszine was transferred to another division. Mary Kirchoff, Eileen Lucas, Marilyn Favaro, and a certain games editor named Barbara Deer all left the company for other pastures. I recall one especially bad deadline when we were actually afraid that DRAGON Magazine was going to cease being printed, but our sanity was spared and things kept rolling.

After things finally settled out, changes continued on the periodicals side of life. Robin Jenkins joined the staff of DRAGON Magazine in May 1986, and Kim Mohan left in September of that year. STRATEGY & TACTICS Magazine was recently sold to another game company in California, where it lives on today under its third publishing parent (SPI, Inc., was the first). Pat Price became the editor of AMAZING® Stories, which has survived and prospered in nice style into its sixth decade of life. We recently added another magazine to our division: DUNGEON™ Adventures, ably run by returnee Barbara Young, once known as Barbara Deer. Eileen Lucas came back as well and now works for all three magazines in various capacities. Marilyn Favaro is now the typesetting operator for DRAGON Magazine and DUNGEON Adventures. Mary Kirchoff came back to work for the Creative Services division in book editing, but still happily makes rude noises when she sees us around.

And DRAGON Magazine? It has gotten even better and better, and there's no end in sight.

Though I earlier mentioned that I am not an expert in the field of art, artwork is still extremely important to me as the editor of DRAGON Magazine, and I have a strong appreciation for the best art we can get. This is the art director's field. A really good art director makes all the difference between a rather plain-looking magazine and a strikingly beautiful one that enhances the glory and "reality" of the fantastic world.

One of the commonly accepted tenets of the role-playing field is that role-playing gamers are very visual people. They tend to have strong imaginative powers and are often quite intelligent, and are thus able to visualize fantastic scenes and creatures with relative ease. But imagination is not enough; gamers want to *see* the dragon, *see* the haunted castle ruins, and *see* the wizard raise his glowing staff to cast a spell. They want art that reflects something of the world of their imagination, and they want the best art there is. And one of the things DRAGON Magazine has been able to offer over the years, in ever-increasing amounts, has been the best fantasy art around.

Because a major focus of the magazine is the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® game system, the art in DRAGON Magazine generally reflects the world of high fantasy brought to life in the game. Unicorns dance, ogres leer, orcs scowl, dwarves glare, elves smile, and dragons roar and snap their wings. Warriors snatch at their swords, sorcerers hurl balls of flame and lightning, thieves hurry across rooftops under a clouded moon, and clerics call the curses of their many-named deities down on their foes. Despite all this diversity, three elements are common to most such works of fantasy (and, in a slightly altered form, to science-fiction artwork as well): magic, monsters, and mankind.

Magic is the stuff of dreams, the ability to transform reality by will alone. Those who enjoy fantasy in any of its forms like to see art showing the power and effects of magical forces. Flying castles, lightning bolts springing from fingertips, a flaming elemental summoned from an invisible plane, a carpet that soars like a bird, a magical sword that shines out in the darkness—these are the things common to the world of the fantastic adventurer. In science-fiction art, high technology replaces magic; rockets appear in place of destriers, laser rifles for shining swords, and battle-scarred suits of powered armor for enchanted shields and chain mail. Nonetheless, the effect on the imagination is still the same; it's like Arthur C. Clarke's dictum that any sufficiently advanced technology is indistinguishable from magic.

Monsters are creatures and beings beyond the realm of our experience, conjured up from our strangest imaginings. The most interesting monsters captured in artwork are not just those that are merely unusual in appearance, but those shown to be *uniquely unusual*. A roaring dragon is one thing, but a dragon breathing flame is another thing altogether. A monster need not look entirely monstrous; in a sense, dwarves and elves are monsters because of their very differences from the mainstream of humanity, and art showing dwarves and elves should reflect this in some fashion. A monster need not even appear to be wicked; dragons may smile, appear wistful, or be shown in contented slumber. Monsters should be masters of the unexpected, the destroyers of complacency. They must be *monsters*.

Finally, fantastic art shows mankind—or more accurately, humanity—as well as monsters. A human face be-

comes an object to which the observer can relate and puts the entire picture in focus: What if I were that person? the onlooker asks, and the imagination is put into gear. Human and humanlike figures in fantastic art form a bond with the onlooker; in some cases, a well-drawn monster's face can do this as well. When the focus is on "monsters," differences between the onlooker and subject are important. With mankind, however, similarities count the most. How is that creature like me? Can I look into its face and see its thoughts, its personality, and its soul? Can I believe in this monster because it is reacting just like people do? These are critical to the success of a great piece of art.

I confess that having good art is a great source of pride to me in my work on the magazine. When an artist's assigned work comes in and Roger Raupp unwraps it, I tear myself away from other pursuits and come over to see it. Good art is wonderful, but great art is pure energy: a trigger for dreams and imagination. Having stared at a computer terminal for several hours at an article jammed with statistical tables and game mechanics, I find welcome relief in looking at a nice piece of art—and an assurance that all is right with the magazine's world. I can face the statistics and mechanics refreshed.

I am less sure of myself when discussing fiction than I am even when discussing art; again, I know what I like, but the practical selection of good fiction is up to the fiction editor. Few things are worse than running fiction that turns the reader off because the writing is amateurish and uses bad grammar, the plot pointless and futile, the characters disagreeable and poorly developed, or the setting boring and vague. Good fantasy fiction should get the reader's imagination stirred up. A good fiction editor gives the magazine an extra vibrancy and life, adding a new dimension to the reader's world.

As with fantasy art, fantasy fiction—which is, of course, art with words—should be capable of generating strong images in the reader's mind. He should hear the wind through the ruins, mournful and haunting. His nose should wrinkle at the acrid smell of rot and mildew in the dungeon.

Furthermore, fiction should be able to tell a story that keeps the reader riveted. It should reveal a lesson learned and touch a character in a spiritual sense, teaching something about the nature of the world and of life. The reader should also feel that lesson inside and be touched by it in some way. The lesson need not be pleasant, but we should understand it and know it to be true, and it should move us.

The task fantasy fiction has for itself resembles that of fantasy artwork: It must get the onlooker or reader involved with it. The triad of magic, men, and monsters (or machines, men, and monsters for science-fiction stories) applies in many of the same ways for fiction as for visual art, and provides the basic hooks for the reader. If a magazine has great fiction, even people who proudly claim never to read fiction will sooner or later read it and get to like the magazine even better. I wouldn't have believed this, but the mail at DRAGON® Magazine says it quite clearly. Fiction adds spice to gaming, providing a playing-out of how people in a fantastic universe might live and talk and fight and die. It provides role-models for game-players to follow in their play—and the lessons learned stay with the reader long after the role-playing game is finished.

Once, before I ever thought of calling Kim Mohan about a job with DRAGON Magazine, I dreamed one night that I actually came to DRAGON Magazine to work on it. I remember that I was tremendously excited, and ran around the office in a state of frenzied joy at having finally gotten to do the work I realized I most wanted to do. When I woke up, my practical self said the dream was silly, but I still felt the delight the dream-job had given me.

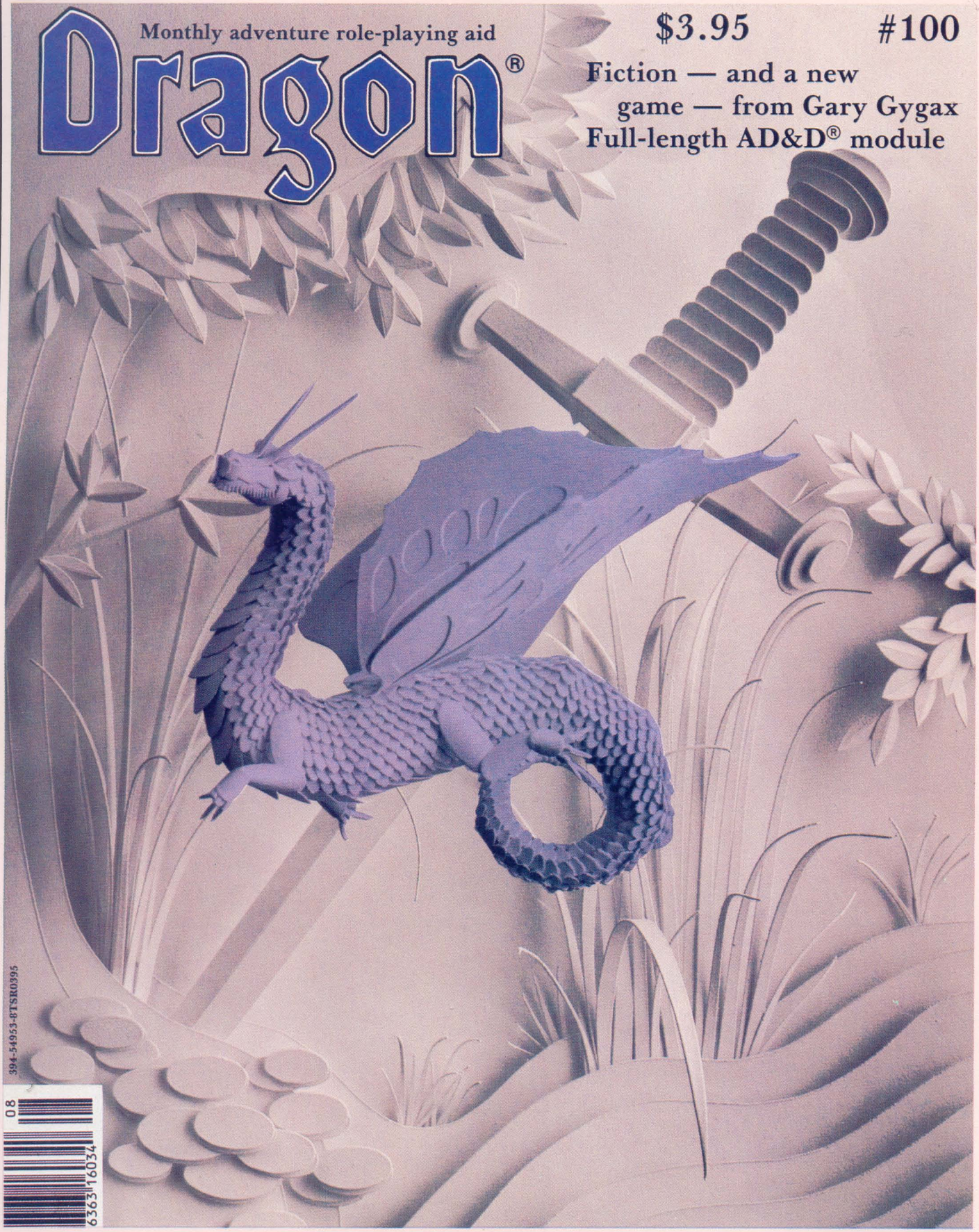
Well, I'm still here, and I will certainly give this job my best. It has been a joy and a trial, but the joy has won out nine times out of ten so far. Roger Raupp has stopped using me for centrifugal-force experiments, and we all have extra-large cubicles to live in. Life is nice.

All of us on the periodicals staff hope that you'll enjoy this selection of DRAGON Magazine's treasures, and we look forward to providing many more issues with greater treasures still. This introduction has come to an end—now it's time to play.

Roger E Moore

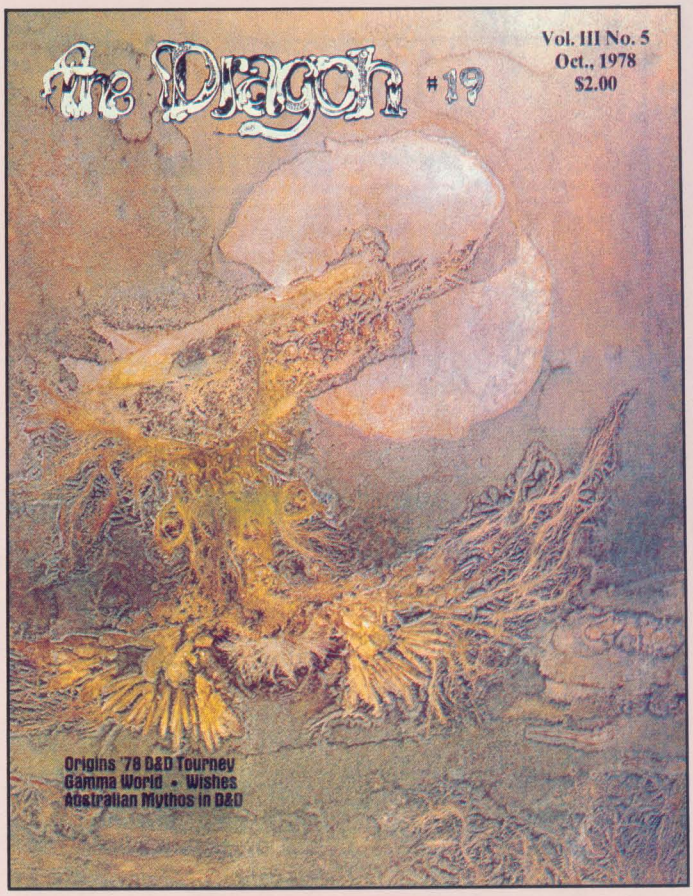
Dragons

Dragon Flight, #71, Clyde Caldwell



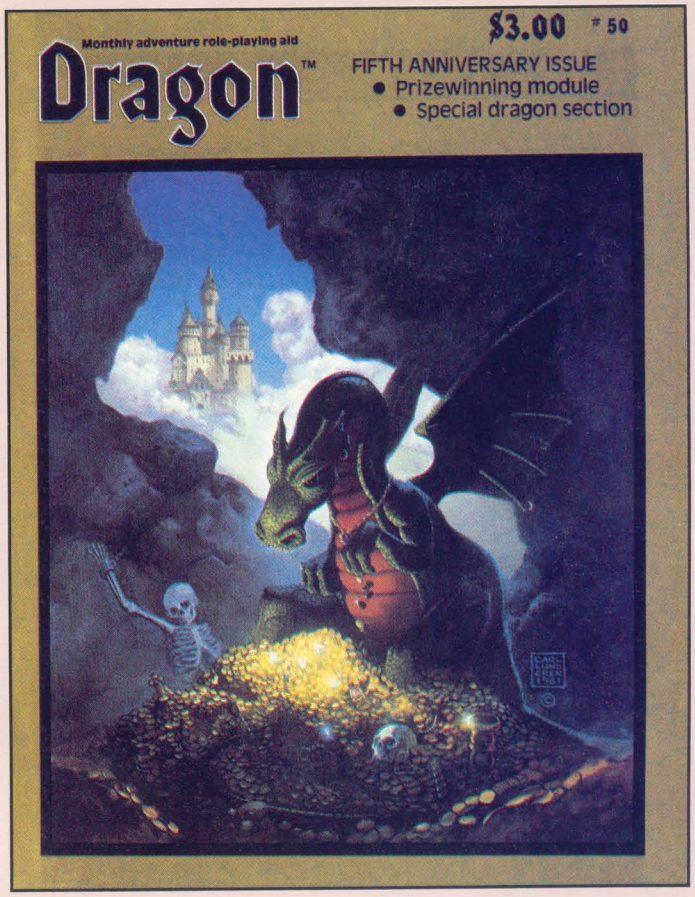
Faerie Dragon, 3-dimensional paper sculpture, #100, Dennis Kauth

Bill Hannon



Dale Carlson

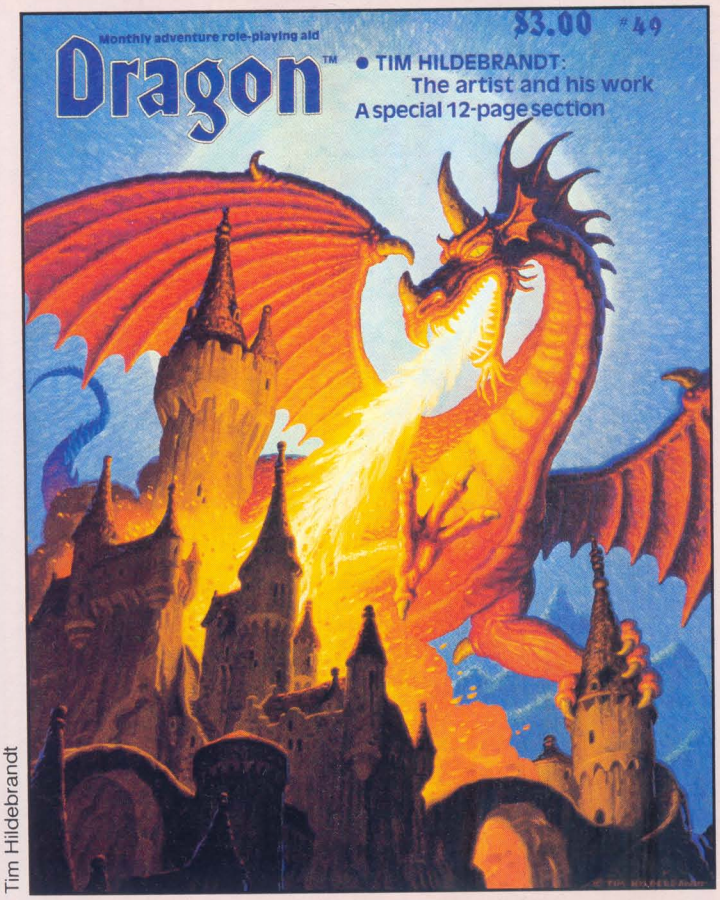
White Dragon Attack, Paul Jaquays



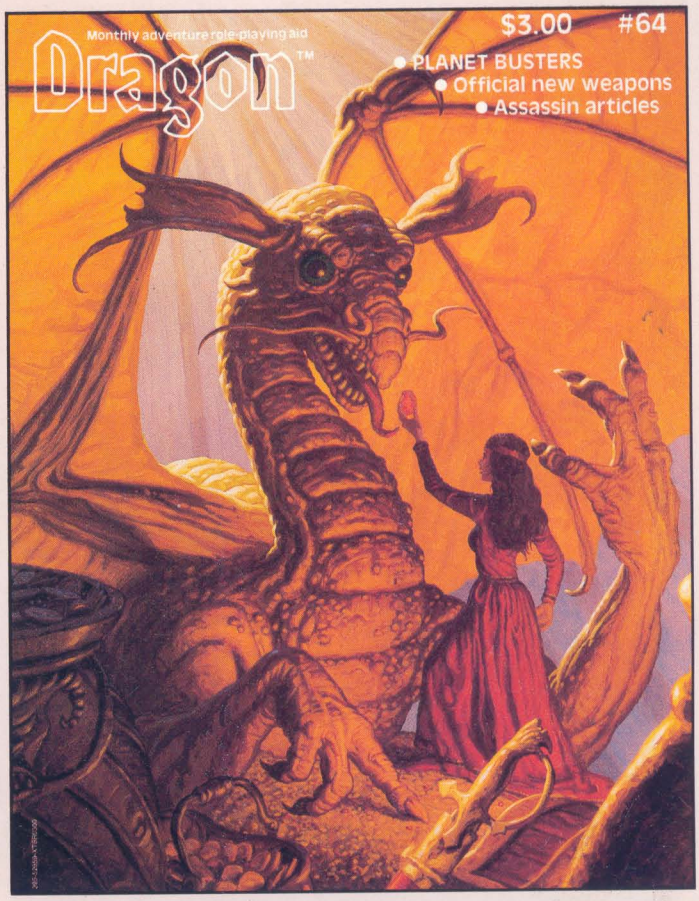
Fifth anniversary issue, Carl Lundgren

Dragon Attack, #72, Clyde Caldwell

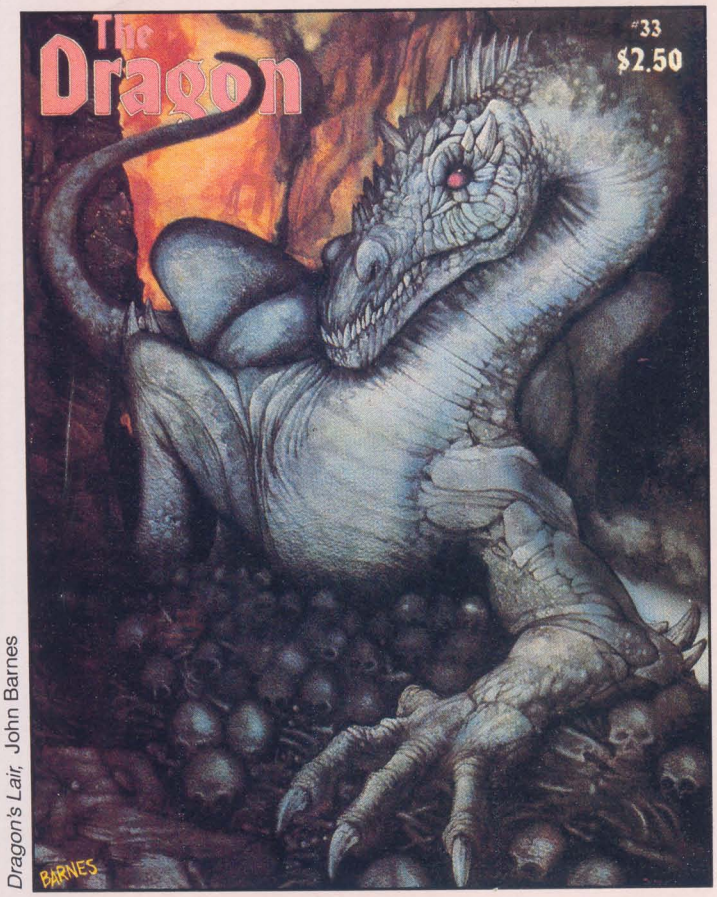
©1983



Tim Hildebrandt



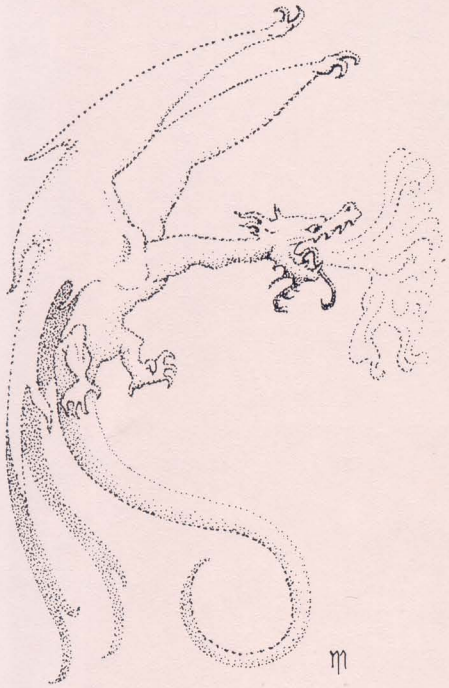
Tim Hildebrandt



Dragon's Lair, John Barnes

Music Lover, Robin Wood

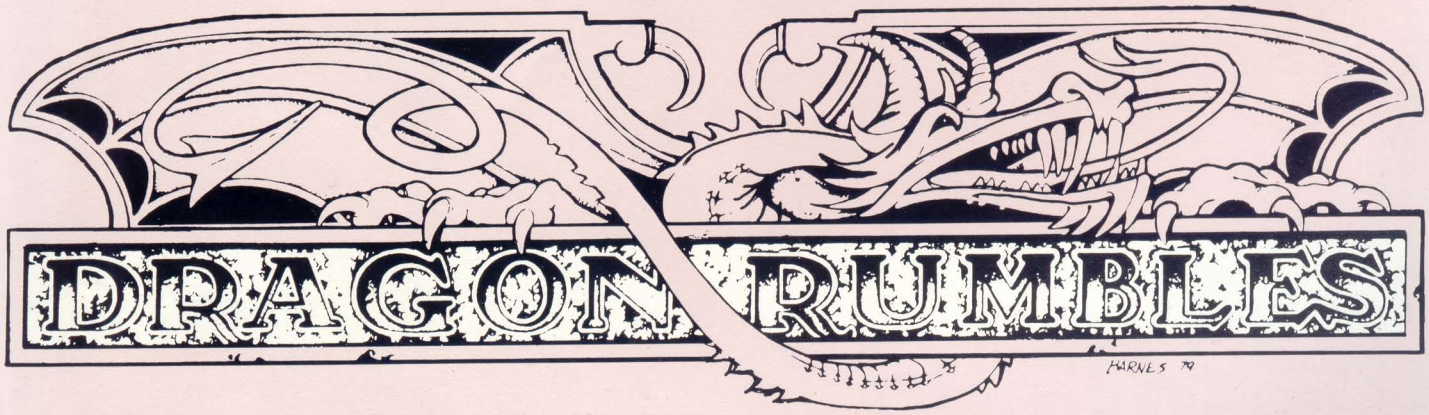
Bridge of Sorrows, Denis Beauvais

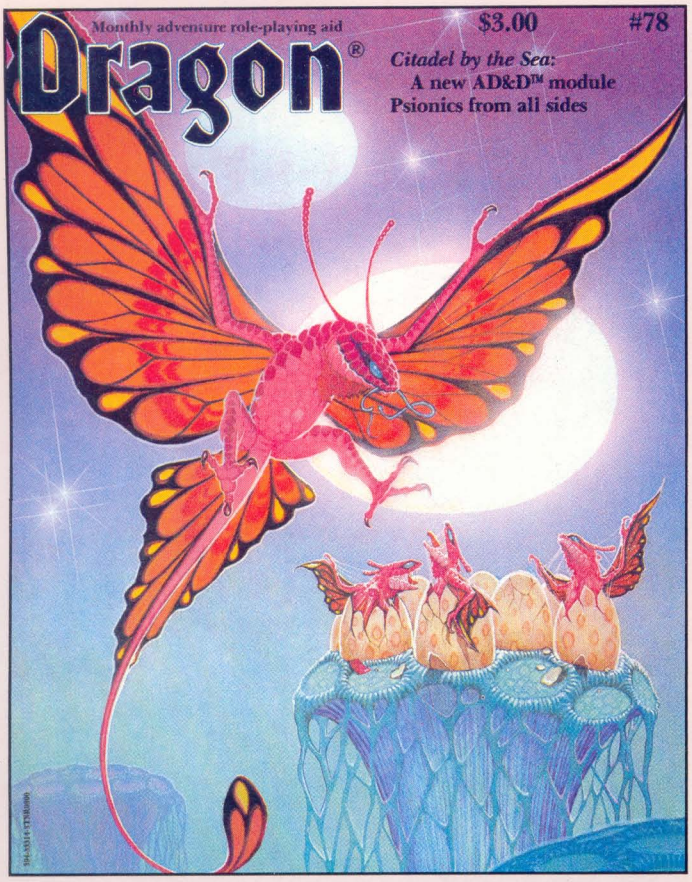


Left—In one of DRAGON Magazine's periodic revelations of new monsters, Samuel Offutt created a new "phase dragon," which has the ability to disappear into, or phase out of, its surroundings; rendered by Bob Maurus

Above—Another new dragon that made its way into the AD&D® game was the purple dragon, the product—logically enough—of a mating of red and blue dragons; rendered by Jeff Easley

Below—The "Dragon Rumbles" logo created by John Barnes was used for several years to head the column in which the Editor talked directly to the readers of the magazine



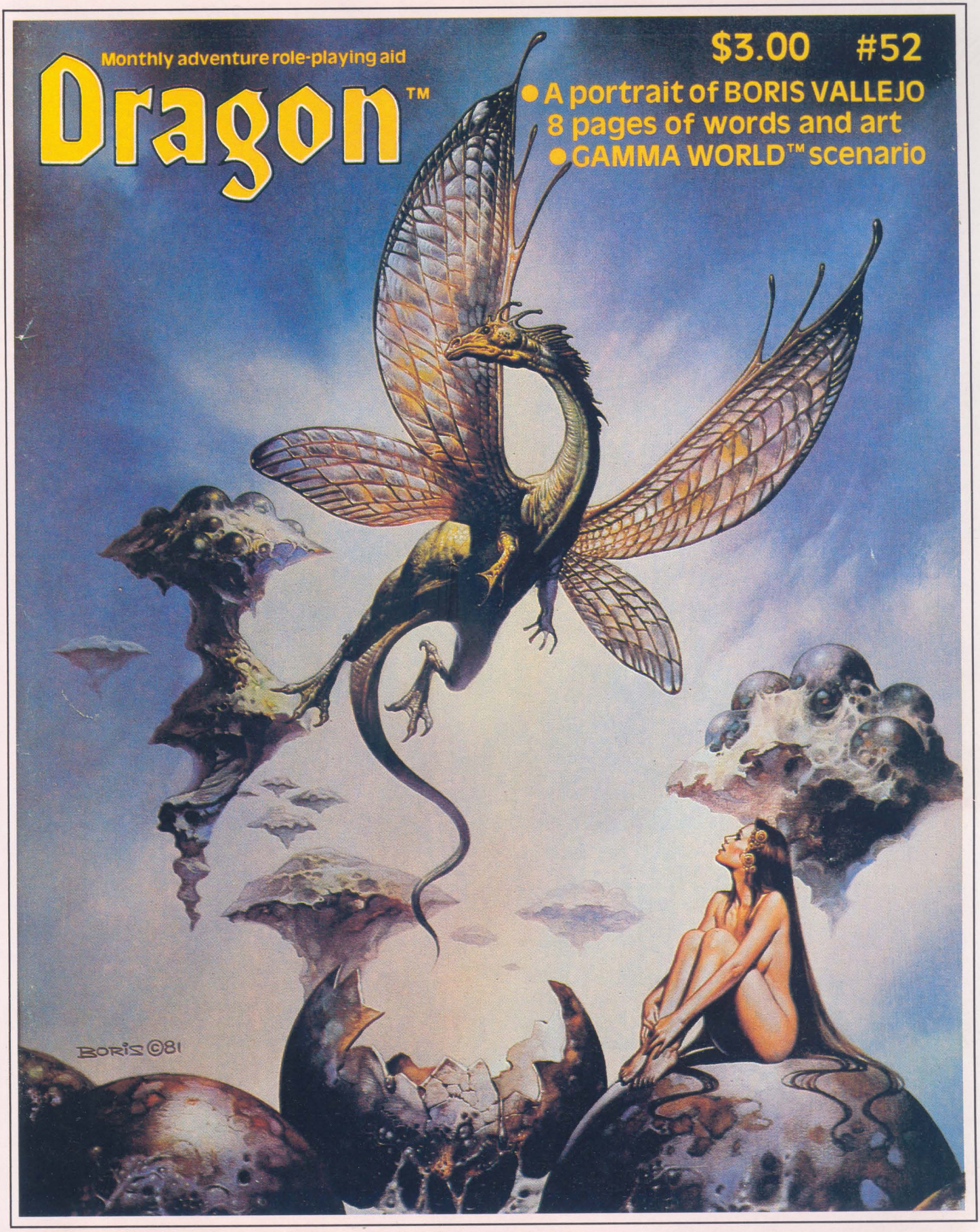


Motherhood, Denis Beauvais

Jim Holloway

Allegory, Denis Beauvais

Birth of the Blues, Robert Pritchard



Boris Vallejo

Originally created by Brian Jaeger and revealed in this artwork by Paul Sonju, the faerie dragon is now a staple of ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® gaming. It is a chaotic pseudodragon often found living with sprites and pixies. Its breath weapon consists of euphoria gas, which Sonju decided must be pink.

This oft-used column logo designed by Darlene told the reader that here were the stories behind the contents of each issue

Dragon's Lair, #65, Clyde Caldwell

This 1981 Valentine gift to DRAGON Magazine readers from Mike Carroll contains a puzzling number of dragons and hearts. We'll give you these clues: There are six hearts of varying sizes contained within the scales of each of the two large dragons. Other hard-to-find hearts are in the center of the pool and way down in the lower right corner near Carroll's signature. There are three dragon-shapes in the left-hand large dragon and two more in the right-hand dragon, plus one in the gold-colored pavement directly above the right-hand edge of the signature. If you give up, check the index on page 128 under the artist's name.

#39, Steve Swenston

A Dragon in Winter, #68, Carl Lundgren

Story illustrations by Valerie A. Valusek.

The Forging of Fear

by Ardath Mayhar

My father sold me to Gillam for two pennies and a good plow. It was a far better price than he had had for Arn, my older brother, and, as well, I could be in the same village and see my parents at times. Arn had gone to the collieries in Wales, and we knew we'd never see him again.

I was happy in my new life. Gillam was the gentlest of men, for all his size and strength. And he was rich, compared to those who lived on the scrap of ground allotted by Lord Roderick to his commons. A smith's skills are so rare and valuable that even nobles give him some leeway in his life and work. And not only for his skills . . . there is an edge of fear clinging always about his almost magical craft.

This being a new fiefdom, recently granted by King Ethelred to Roderick's family, there was much work to be done. Though Gillam was no armorer, he shod the steeds of the nobles, and he forged the tools used in breaking and clearing the land. So strong was his art that he was chosen to forge the iron bands that bound together the oaken door-leaves of the Lord's new keep. I arrived in time to help with that.

I was not allowed to touch one scrap of the Lord's metal. I only cleaned and put away the hammers and tongs and punches and rasps used in the work. But I pumped mightily on the bellows, forcing the charcoal to white-heat at the center of the forge. I watched closely, even while pumping, as the straps took shape. They were formed into graceful curves, with the heavy lily-crest of Roderick centered upon each. I was fascinated by the boring of the bolt-holes, the shaping of the hinges, the finishing of the edges. Though it was obvious how each matter was done, still I felt the magic of the smith's skill.

And I vowed to become a smith, too—a frivolous dream for one born of my circumstances, but it kept me pumping enthusiastically.

Even better than the work was my treatment by Gillam's family. He and his wife had no child of their own, to their sorrow, and his wife seemed to extend toward me some of the affection that she would otherwise have given to her children. Gillam's niece also lived with them, having been orphaned very young, and the two of us, both in our early teens, settled amicably together almost as if children of the family.

There was altogether enough to eat! That always astonished me—my father would never have sold his children if he could have fed them by his efforts in the Lord's fields. But those efforts always fell far short, once the grain was divided, and starvation stood beside his door every day of his life. He knew that we could only be better elsewhere. I cannot know of Arn, but for myself I was more than happy with the life he contrived for me. Instead of toiling in the fields from dawn to dusk, ill-fed and more inadequately clothed and housed, I was full and warm, and could watch the miracles that took place at forge and anvil.

Gillam never struck me—few lads might say so much, I know. Yet even when my master was angered (and he had cause to be more than once), he withheld the sweep of his huge hand that might well have taken me out of this world entirely. It was not only his need for my services. He also had affection for me. When I was burned by flying sparks or fiery bits of metal, his broad face would furrow as if my pain were his own.

But the thing that convinced me of his regard most firmly was the fact that he talked with me as if I were a man, a man with the education and wit to understand his words. This was the bond that kept me by him more solidly than my servitude.

He was no peasant, was Gillam. He had been trained by the clergy—at Avebury, no less—his father having been bailiff for a powerful Lord. Gillam could read, either in Latin or in our pithy Saxon. He could set quill to parchment with a hand finer than our Lord's own priest could manage. He understood many things of which others in our village never dreamed.

He talked of the past to me as we worked together filing punches or adjusting the jaws of tongs. "It was in many ways a good life," he said, his big hands moving lovingly over the shape of a maul. "And there were writings in the abbey—I would dearly have loved to have had the time to read through the entire lot of those. But it was not to be. I could not accept many matters that were articles of faith . . . and there was one at which I laughed. When added to the list of my sins of omission and my interest in the Old Religion, that was the last matter needed to expel me. So I became a smith."

I was no fool, young as I was. I knew that a good story must lurk behind that statement. I asked, "What was that? The last thing you could not accept?"

He laughed, pitching a bolt into a bucket and taking up another to check the fit of it into the Lord's chariot-tongue. "Now that was humorous! Sheer folly, you understand, on all parts, from the abbot down to the lay brothers. You have heard the name Donnestoun?"

I gaped. "Him that was abbot of Glastonbury and adviser to kings? Indeed, even here we know his name. They speak of him now as a holy one—"

"That great ninny! And now they do, indeed, call him Holy One, when he was and remained a self-seeker . . . or a deluded fool, which is worse. He was a smith when the need arose, the brothers told me. And one day, at his forge, he looked up to see the face of the Dark One in the window at his side. Filled with holy wrath that the demon might try tempting him, he heated his pincers to red-heat and caught the fiend by his long nose, pinching and burning him until he shrieked for mercy and swore never to trouble the pious fraud again."

Despite myself, I laughed.

Gillam laughed with me, though a hint of anger curved his grizzled brows down over his eyes. "Laughable enough. Even a child can see that. Either the holy Donnestoun was a liar or a fool, as I said before, but the brothers swallowed that great tale as if it were a custard. Never a one seemed to contract a bellyache trying to digest it. I was not of such tough stuff. I threw it up into the face of the master of novices, and he, in turn, cast me away from my intended goal."

I thought long about that conversation. It seemed to me that a man who was less honest than Gillam might have aped his fellows and pretended to believe, in order to save his place. But I learned, as I lived with the smith, that his honesty went, like the roots of an oak, right down to the streams that fed his being. Every soul in our village knew that, as did even the Lord and his sons and those lesser nobles who served the Lord and lived in the keep that was rising, every day, to loftier heights above the village.

A day came when the Lord's youngest son, Ranald, brought his favorite mare to be shod. As the red metal clanged beneath the hammer which curved it to fit the anvil, the young man looked about him, his nose in the air. There being none of his own kind with whom to talk, he deigned to speak to me as I rested from my bellows work.

"A low place!" he sniffed, drawing away from the pile of fresh dung that his own steed had dropped near his boot. "A veritable Hell, in fact. Stenches and sweating serfs! Not suitable for me to wait in, I swear! Call me when all is done, boy!" And he strolled into the yard separating the shop from Gillam's house.

Something made me follow him to peer through the doorway. Lilibet, unfortunately, was just hanging the newly washed underclothes upon the barberry bushes to dry in

the sun. Gillam's niece had grown, along with me, so gradually that I had not realized how much a woman she could appear. But when she stretched up to spread a length of stuff across the stone wall that faced the road, the sight was not lost upon Ranald, I could see. Something cold thumped, just once, in my chest.

I returned to Gillam's side, trying to hurry the task along in any way I could. I mistrusted the arrogant young man as much as I hated his sneering face, and I feared for Lilibet. There had been that in his look . . .

I spat into the dust and crossed myself.

Gillam shod the horse in jig time and let the beast out into the yard and assisted the youth to mount. Not even a small coin was forthcoming as he wheeled the mount and sped away.

My master looked about the yard, but Lilibet had gone into the house again, and I hesitated to tell him the thing that I had feared. Yet he knew that something was troubling me, so he led me back into the shop and sat upon a billet of wood.

"It is hard, young Pell," he said, "when you are young to swallow the like of that young sprout. Yet he is not what he thinks himself to be, as his father is not the great and earthshaking Lord he pretends that he is."

I looked up at him from my seat on a sack of charcoal. My eyes widened. "How not?" I asked. "Both have the power of life and death over such as us."

"As does a greater Lord, back to the east, over our Lord upon the hill. And above that Lord, the King, far away on the coast, and over the King . . . why the Deity Himself. Not one is without one greater than himself. And not one of those fine men, puffed up with self-esteem as they are, can do this—"

He reached down and lifted a bar of metal that waited to be turned into shoes or shafts or bolts. With his two hands, he curved it into a bow. His face was a bit red, though the remainder of the glow from the charcoal in the forge might have been to thank for that.

Before I could think what to say, he frowned, his brows meeting above his deep gray-green eyes. "There are many kinds of power, Pell. The power in my hands is one kind. The power upon yonder hill is another. That of the Abbey is still a third. And there is a fourth."

My heart thumped in my side. I knew what he meant, though we had never spoken of it. We both knew that there were those who disappeared from their hearths around the time of All-Hallows and Midsummer Eve. We had both heard tales of dark doings that stank of brimstone.

"But you have never . . . ," I began.

He raised his hand. "That is a child's power, out there among the standing stones. Capering in the night is for those without the wit to seek for true strength of will and of thought. When they sent me from the Abbey, I did not turn from the Light . . . but I did not turn away from other matters, either. There are other magics than those of the Dark, never doubt it. Those I have looked into . . . a bit."

We went home to our supper in silence. The Dame and Lilibet looked questioningly at us both, but what might we have said? Nothing that they would have understood, it was certain. Yet each time my eyes met Lilibet's a shiver went down me. She was so fair, so sweet in her young innocence. In time, Gillam would petition the Lord to wed her to the miller's son, and it would be a match that was good for her and for him. Stan, the miller, was in full agreement.

Yet there in the rushlight, before a board laid with food in plenty and in the company of those I loved and served, I felt a chill of foreboding come over me.

Would any warning of mine have averted the thing to come? I doubt it. Ranald lost no time. Less than a se'nnight later, he abducted Lilibet while Gillam was away dealing with the charcoal-burners. Two of his brothers came with the young noble, along with several of the young spurs who tenanted the keep. They struck down the Dame, and they laid me low with the flat of a blade.

When my wits came to me again, I was lying with my head in Dame Marga's lap, and she was sponging the blood from my face. Tears were tracking her pale face. When I struggled to sit, she pushed me back with a firm hand.

"Nay, Pell. Lie still until your head is quiet. A clap to the skull such as that can be dangerous if you do not care for it." Her tone was matter-of-fact, belying the tears that still streamed.

"Lilibet?" I whispered, dreading her answer.

She bent her head. A tear dropped onto my face from her cheeks.

Then I sat up. "I shall take Gillam's staff and go after them!" I cried.

"They have gone into the keep. You cannot follow them there, Pell. Gillam will be here soon—the sun is almost down. Then he will know what is best to do. The Lord has ever dealt justly with us . . . but . . . Ranald is his son. . . ."

I could see that she had scant hope of justice, this time. No more than had I.

Gillam returned before nightfall. When the news was told, he turned terribly pale, even through the ruddy flush set upon his skin by the heat of the forge.

"I shall go at once to my Lord," he said. Without another word he did just that. It was late when he returned. His thump upon the door brought both of us running to open the latch and slip away the bar.

He had brought Lilibet. Her slight shape barely weighted his arms at all, and her fair hair trailed in a tousle from the crook of his elbow. For a moment I thought that he had succeeded, that the Lord had granted her return. Then I saw the blood upon her sleeve, the limp way her wrist swung, her lax hand.

The Dame gave a little moan. "Dead?"

He nodded, entered, and laid my foster sister upon her narrow couch. Weeping, I barred the door again and turned to face my master.

"What happened . . . to her?" I choked, though I greatly feared his answer.

"They had no time to ravish her, Pell," he said, and there were tears in his own eyes. "She found a knife in a fruit bowl and used it well." He sobbed one great, strangling sob, then was silent.

"I'll kill them!" I shouted, turning blindly toward the door. His great hand caught me.

"No. We will do . . . something else. We will imprison them in fear. We will drown them in their own panic. They will know more than the things they made our little one feel, before they are done. Come with me, Pell. There is much to do before midnight."

We set pitch torches about the shop until it blazed with light. When I set the charcoal into the forge and began bringing the heat up, Gillam made a pile of stones that looked something like the new keep that was the Lord's pride and home. By the time the forge was glowing, he had the model of the great house completed.

We knew the approach of midnight, as did the animals, by the feel of lateness in the night air, the set of the stars. As iron heated, we felt the time draw near. Gillam drew a long breath. Then he took a lengthy strap of red-hot metal from its fiery bed and laid it upon the anvil.

"Doom! Doom! Doom!" said the hammer, ringing against the anvil.

He forged the straps together, setting the lily-crest at the join. He did not make them beautiful, as he had done those others. He made them terribly strong. I could see his lips working as he hammered and shaped the metal, but what words came from him I could not hear above the clangor of his labor. He seemed bigger than before—taller, more threatening than I had ever dreamed that he could be. A strange tingle filled the workshop as he tempered the straps in cool water and drew them, still glowing fully, forth again.

We slipped them, with the aid of tongs, over the modeled keep that filled the space

braced by the oaken beams from which we suspended heavy work. As the straps cooled, they tightened until not even a blade could fit between metal and stone.

I stared, awed. "What magic is this?" I whispered, and Gillam heard.

He bent upon me a gaze so withdrawn and terrible that I cringed. "Those who practice the Old Religion call it sympathetic magic," he said. "As fares this small keep, so will the great one. The strength of the very soil and stone will hold it captive!" New words came from his lips as his eyes turned from me, but I stopped my ears and would not listen. By the time the second band was cramped about the keep, I was filled with terror.

Yet anger kept me going. Whatever Gillam was doing, whatever force, Dark or Light, that he called upon, this was justified. Lilibet had been all that was good and pure. Men who could cause her death in such fashion had no right to be called men, far less virtuous ones. If the Dark One had appeared at that instant and warned that my continued work at the bellows would mean instant translation into Hades, I would have pumped on. But the work was done, at last. The darkness faded from Gillam's face.

The old kindly smile shaped his lips. "We have done well, Pell. Dawn is upon us. Come into the yard and look up."

The breeze was freshening when we stepped into the open. A hint of dawn glowed in the sky behind the black bulk of the keep. It seemed as usual. The cry of the sentry on the tower came to our ears, dimmed with distance.

"I can see nothing amiss," I said, disappointed.

"We will rest awhile. You will see the result of our labors when the tenants of yonder house begin to stir." He turned to the house, and when inside, he fell into his bed beside the quietly weeping Dame.

We woke to screams and curses. I sat, and Gillam sprang to his feet.

"Pack up the things we must have, Marga," he said to the wondering Dame. "We will leave this place almost immediately, and there will be none to question our going. Pell and I must tend the forge before we go."

She asked no question but began bustling about at once. I could see that she had no objection to leaving this spot behind her forever.

We entered the smithy with the first rays of the sun. Someone hammered upon our door a moment afterward, crying, "Gillam! There is need at the keep! All are trapped there, inside the walls, and none can even so much as leap down from the parapet!"

Gillam grinned, his face ghastly. "Tell Lord Roderick that I will not come!" he shouted. "And be damned to him!"

We emptied out the bits of charcoal and packed the forge-bowl into the cart. The anvil strained us both, but it went in, too. All the tools, those precious things, were wrapped in leather and placed neatly in a big chest. When we had that in place, and the shop was stripped of everything useful, Gillam backed the old horse that had hauled so many loads of charcoal and metal for us between the cart-shafts. We hitched him, and he drew the cart out into the new sunlight.

I waited in the now-familiar smithy. In a bit Gillam returned with Lilibet in his arms. Where the anvil had stood, he laid her tenderly upon a sheepskin from her bed. At her head was the banded keep. At her feet he set into the dirt floor an iron cross that he had forged for the gate of the Lord's chapel.

Then he showed me where to dig, where to pry. We worked in a frenzy, loosing stones at key points in the structure. The stones began creaking about us.

He bent and kissed his niece on the forehead. I touched her hand. Then we left her there, went outside, and brought the entire building down over her. No noble Lady ever had a finer tomb. None would ever dig through that rubble to find her—or that ensorcelled model of the castle above the village. It would remain there, secure and undisturbed, while serfs and freemen struggled to free their Lord from his own house.

The last of the dust had not settled when we pulled away from our own home, out of the low gateway, into the dusty road. The cries and pleas of those trapped in the keep filled all the air. The Dame looked quizzically at her husband.

"Will they ever escape?" she asked. Her eyes told me that she had a notion of the thing that we had done that night.

Gillam's face was as grim as the stone of the crag as he whipped up the horse. "Not until they go forth as ghosts," he said.

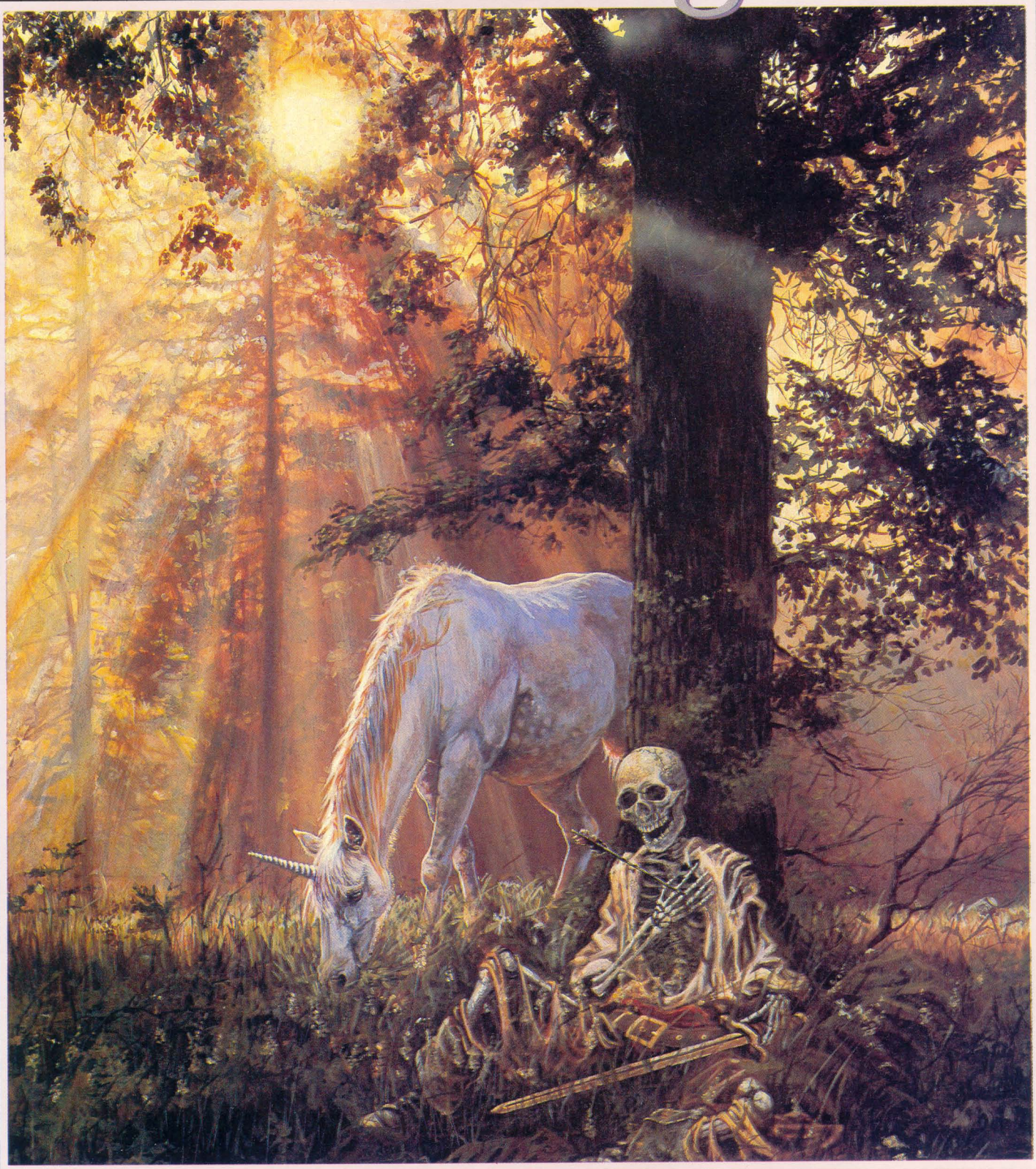
The Dame reached behind and patted my arm. "Good. Let them rot!" she murmured.

The road wound ahead, exciting to me who had never traveled past the fields. There was always work for a smith . . . and his helper. Wherever we might go, we would prosper, I felt certain. It would have been better if Lilibet had gone, too, bubbling with laughter at everything new, but she was, at least, safe from harm, now.

I looked up at the crag, the castle shining in the morning brightness. No eye could see the spell that bound it round, yet my knowing seemed to visualize the bands of metal centered with lily-crests that imprisoned those within.

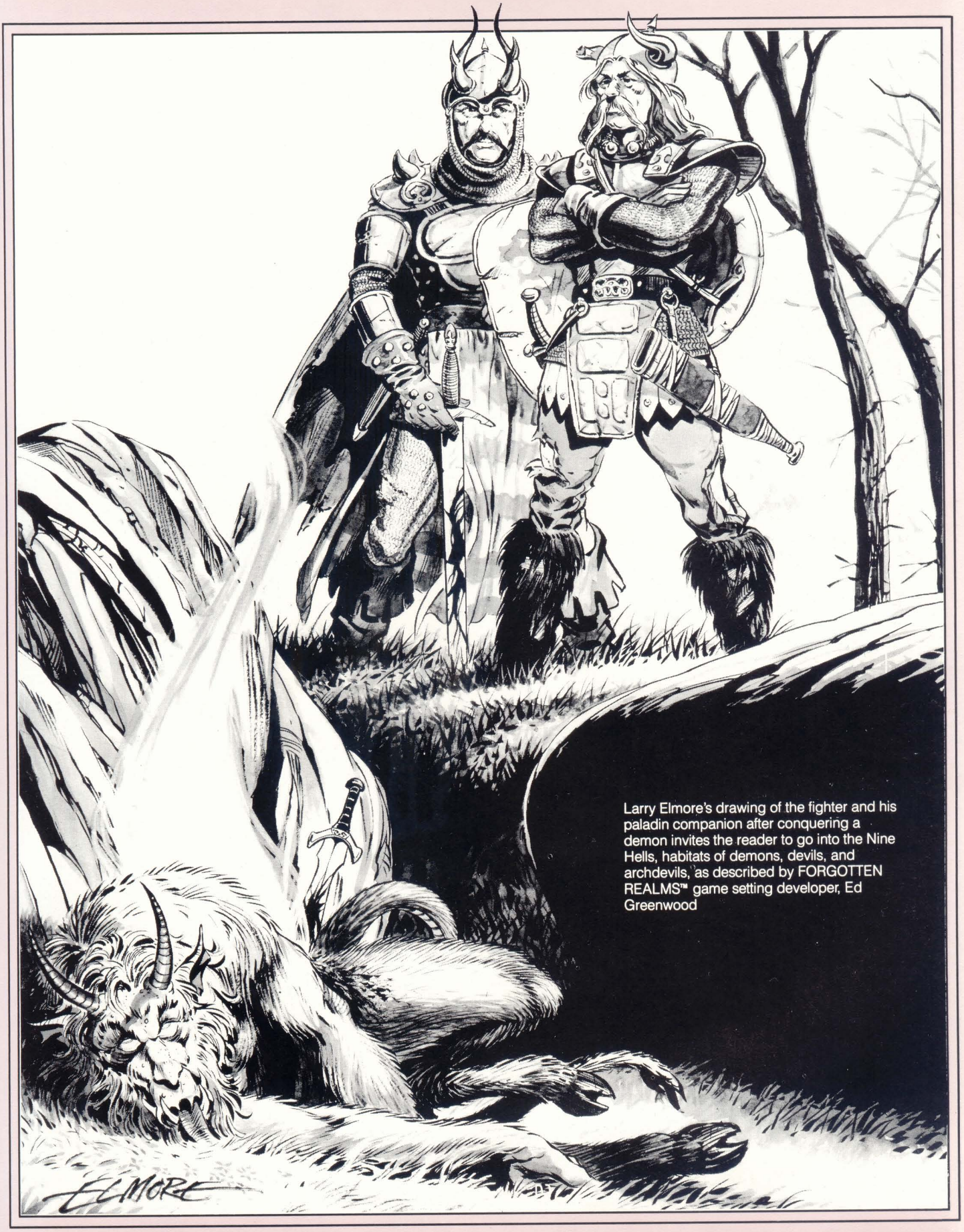
I crossed myself. They were in Fate's hands, now. The Dark One had nothing to do with it.

Fighters



The Vanquished Cavalier, #110, Kevin Davies

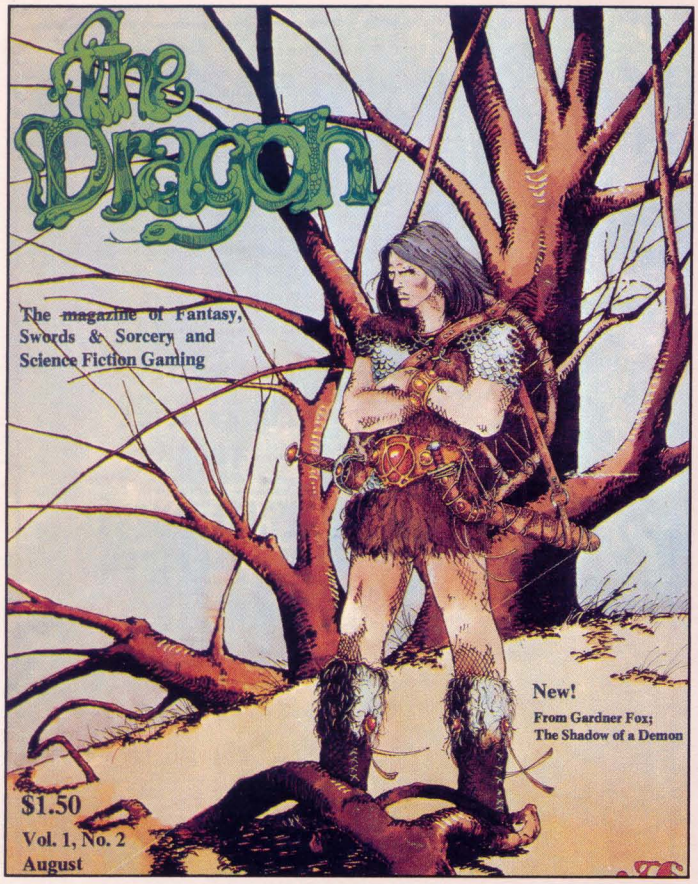
The Cup of Golden Death, #38, John Barnes



Larry Elmore's drawing of the fighter and his paladin companion after conquering a demon invites the reader to go into the Nine Hells, habitats of demons, devils, and archdevils, as described by FORGOTTEN REALMS™ game setting developer, Ed Greenwood

Escape from Skull Keep, #58, Clyde Caldwell

Ain of the Arrow was shown by Jerry Eaton, for the story "The Sagittarian" by Jessica Amanda Salmonson



Tom Canty

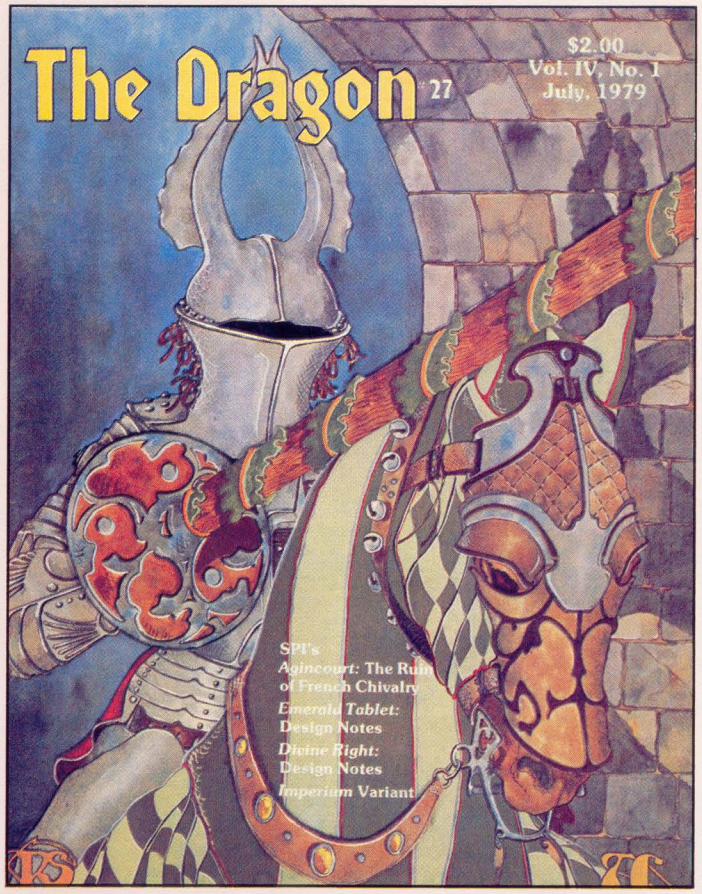
Dave Sutherland

The Stolen Sacrifice, Tom Canty

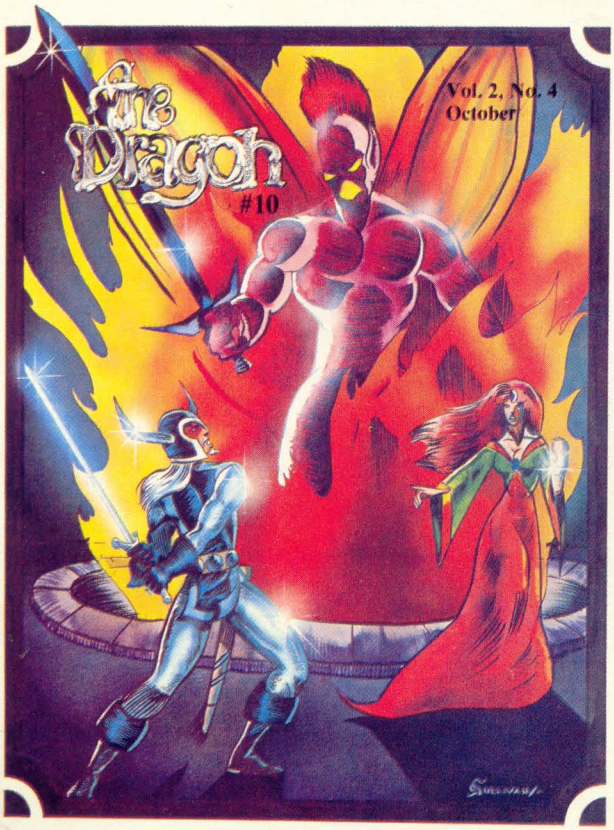
Drawing by Steve Swenston

A group of young adventurers finds reality very bloody, in "And Adventuring To Go . . ." by Brenda Gates Spielman, illustrated by Jerry Eaton.

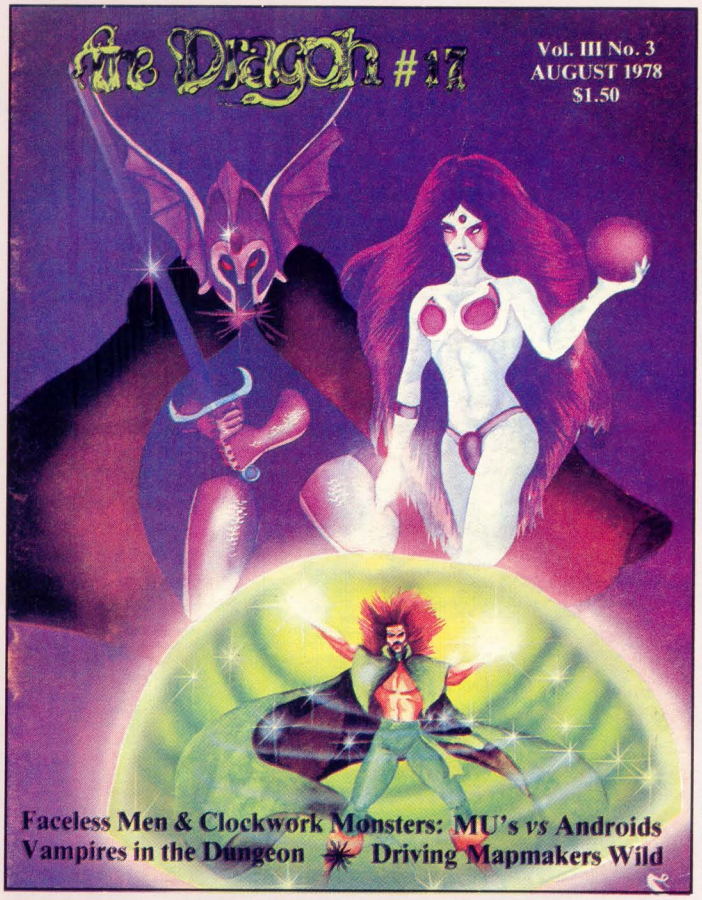
Elrohir



Tom Canty



John Sullivan

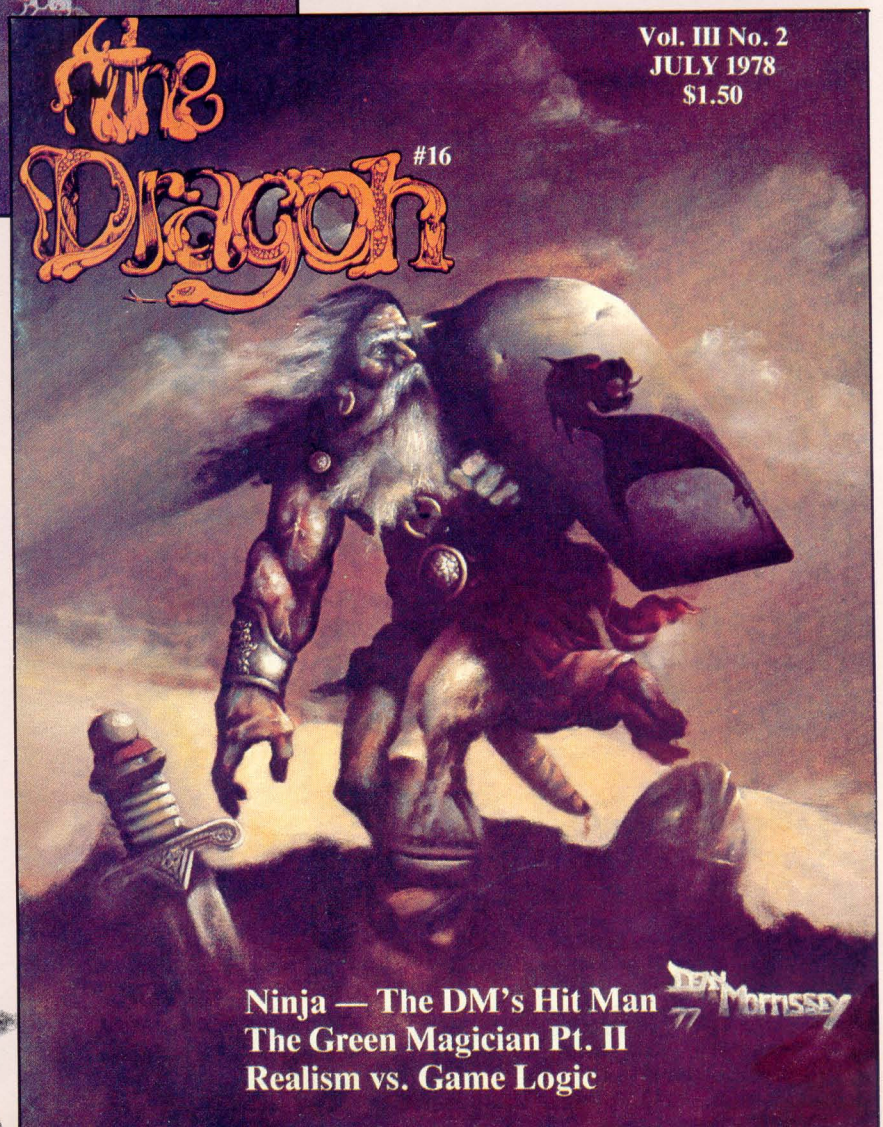


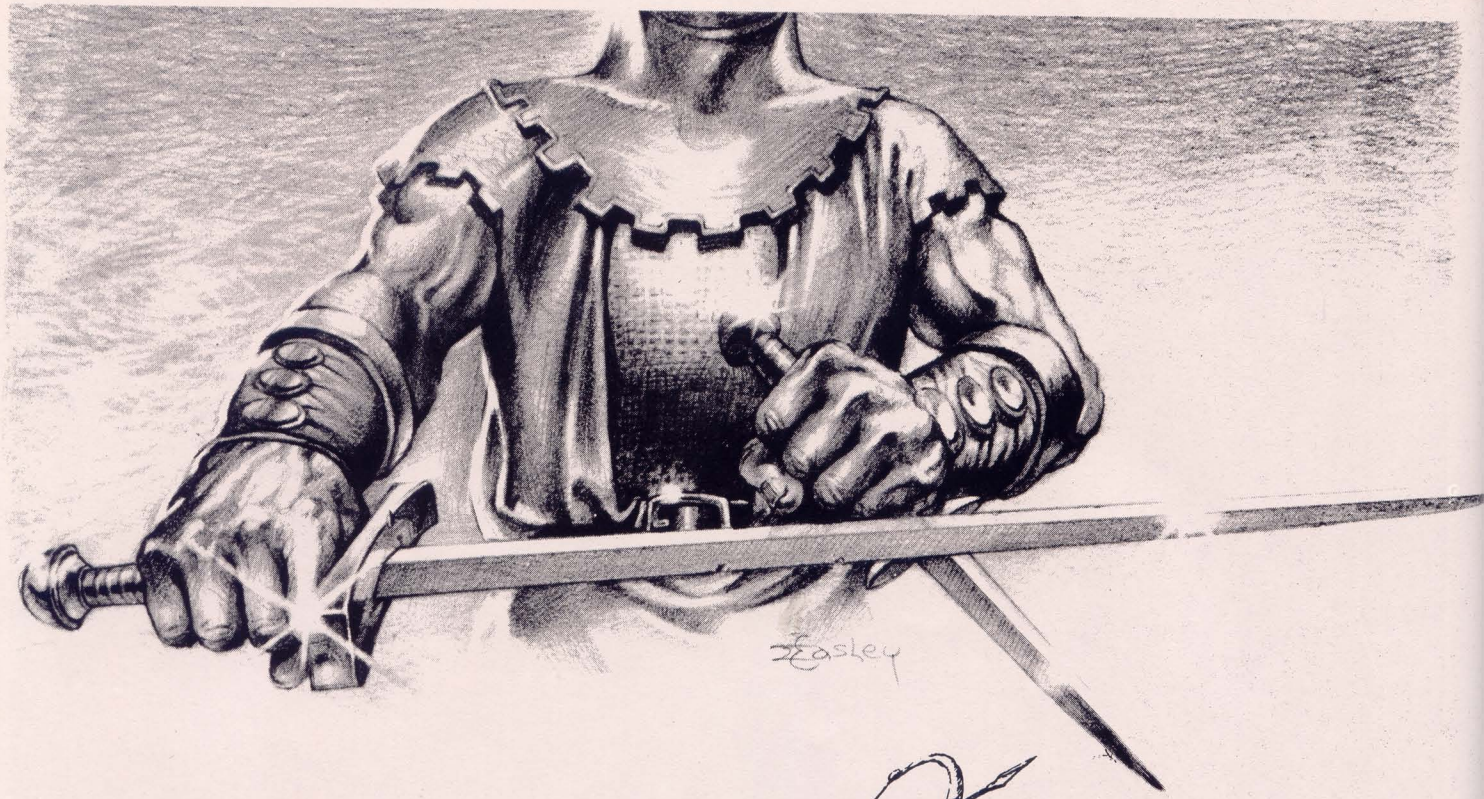
John Sullivan

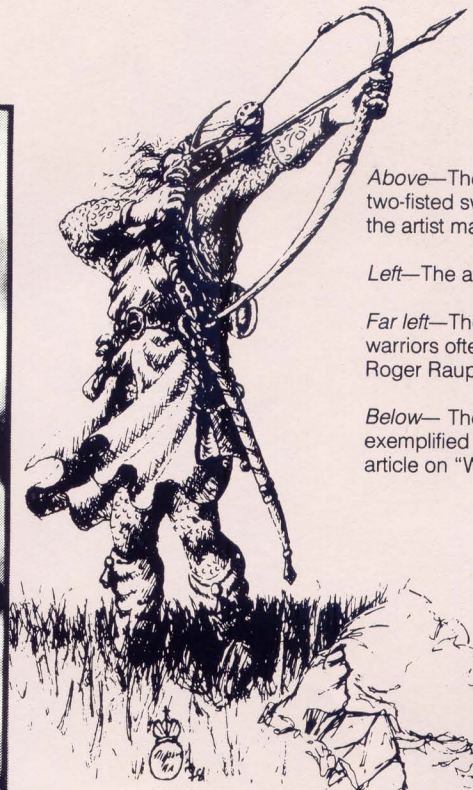
Left—The lands through which a fantasy character adventures may be frought with great evil; #28, by Dean Morrissey

Below left—This Ice Age warrior by Jeff Easley may have his humorous aspects, but he is a figure of great power

Below—Dean Morrissey, dean of DRAGON® Magazine's cover artists, made his first appearance on the cover of issue #16





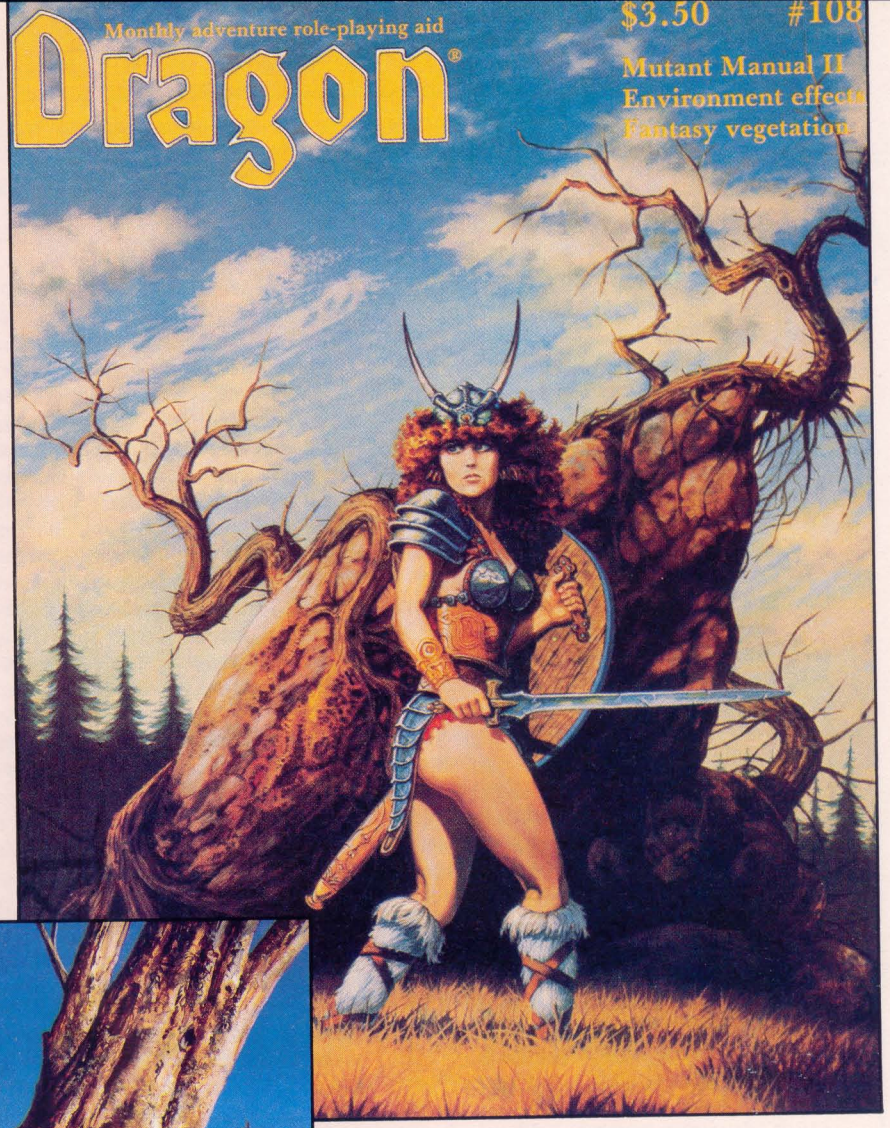


Above—The fighter of fantasy may find it safer to be a two-fisted sword carrier—especially if he's headless, as the artist made him; by Jeff Easley

Left—The archer; by Jeffrey Lanners

Far left—The Norse gods of Gladsheim are fierce warriors often called on by fighters for their aid; by Roger Raupp

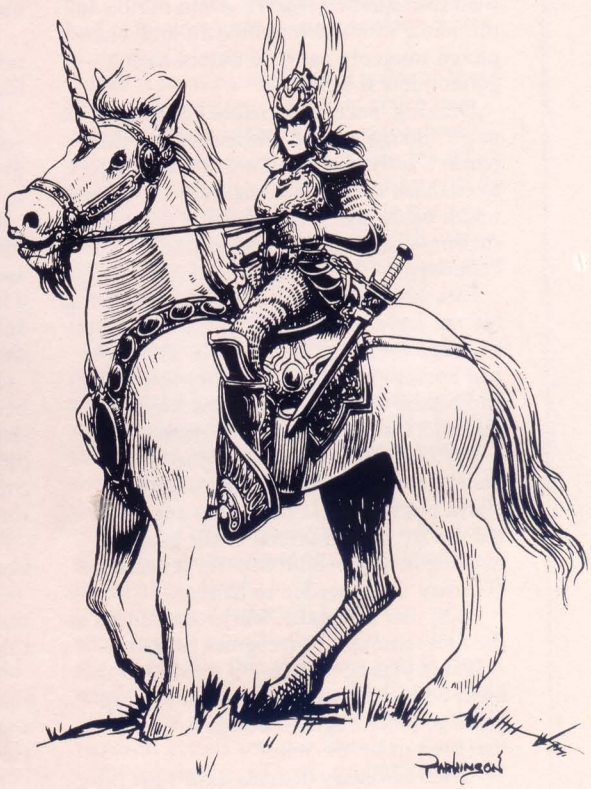
Below— The fighter may just as easily be female, as exemplified by this figure by Jamie Graham, for an article on "Women Want Equality"



Right—Larry Elmore's female fighter is unaware of *Hidden Danger,* on #108

Below—*Alerelean,* by Clyde Caldwell, on #94, features female warrior and her familiar

Below right—The female cavalier, symbol of all that is good, may ride a unicorn, symbol of all that is pure; by Keith Parkinson



Desperate Acts

by Gordon Linzner

The buzzing originated from a thick cloud of horseflies in the center of the forest path. Their activity obscured a corpse the size of a sheep. Captain Marya scowled; something was amiss. This was no land for grazing.

She reined up sharply. Leather breeches creaked against saddle as she leaned forward for a better view. A few flies rose toward her broad, flat-nosed face, attracted by the sweet odor of dye. Her hand shot out, capturing three; she crushed them against her thigh. Most of the winged scavengers were, however, too busy gorging themselves to react to the pounding hooves and raised dust of a dozen horses.

Captain Marya turned to her second-in-command. Her mouth snapped shut. Without waiting for the commands of her captain, Lieutenant Luca was already signaling a halt to Sergeant Orvus and the guards. The captain's scowl deepened as, without a word, the long-limbed lieutenant dismounted to approach the body on foot. Luca's commission was a few hours old; it was too soon for her to anticipate her superior's orders, too soon for her to act independently. The captain would have condoned—no, expected—Lieutenant Calbot's taking such initiative, but Calbot had been Captain Marya's aide for more than five summers. Marya would not be on this path, with a new lieutenant and a hand-picked troop of guards, if Calbot hadn't gotten himself killed.

Dressing down Luca before her subordinates, though, would undermine the lieutenant's authority before she'd had a chance to establish it. Without that respect, Luca would be useless. Marya decided to save the chewing-out until they returned to Pellnoran.

Luca stood by the writhing black mass that hid the body, wrinkling her nose in distaste although there was little stench. The thing had not lain here long. She drew her sword and passed its flat a hand's breadth above the object, scattering flies in a rush of air.

From the speed with which the color drained from Luca's normally ruddy face, Marya perceived that her lieutenant regretted the act. So did several of the guards, retching noisily behind her. Yet it had been necessary. They needed to be sure.

"Yes, that's Brogan," Marya announced as the flies returned. "I recognize his tattoo."

Luca repressed a shiver. "I remember the night he had it done. The design was supposed to protect against demons. Chaos, that used to be his chest!"

"Then obviously demons didn't get him, eh, Lieutenant?"

Luca stiffened at the captain's harsh tone. Realizing that her sword was still drawn, she sheathed it. "Yes, Captain."

Good recovery, Marya thought, but better had there been no outburst of weakness. "You were closest, Lieutenant. From here, Brogan's remains did not much resemble those of Lieutenant Calbot."

"I would agree, Captain. The limbs have been hacked away; gruesome, but not unusual." Whereas, as every man and woman on the path knew, Calbot's body had been deposited outside Marya's quarters and stuffed in a chest no larger than a loaf of bread, apparently intact save that it lacked a skeleton. The presence of his lieutenant's baton had enabled Marya to identify the crumpled mass of skin and tissue; that, and Derik's taunting note.

"Brogan was inexcusably careless for a scout. His orders were to report back at the first hint of danger. There's no reason for this."

"I doubt he planned it," muttered a tangle-bearded guard.

Marya turned in her saddle, gray eyes flashing, face seeming as crimson as her uniform tunic. "I heard that, Hargin! You're on night watch for a month! And you can bury the scout." She shifted her gaze to the slim, dark-skinned man to the left of the outspoken guard. "Sergeant Orvus!"

The sergeant urged his horse forward the few paces to his captain's side. "Orders, Captain?"

"Issue a shovel to Guard Hargin. Half of your guards are to scour the woods for Brogan's limbs, but with extreme caution. The balance will strike camp in the last clearing."

Orvus's eyebrows crawled up his high forehead, but Marya offered no explanation, and he was not one to question orders. With a brisk salute, he turned his horse around and rejoined the troop to assign men and women their tasks.

Even as a sergeant, however, Luca had not been that inhibited. She'd regained her steed, so when the captain turned their eyes met on a level. Marya's lips tightened; she could see the question on Luca's face before the latter spoke.

"Brogan's not yet cool. Derik must be near."

"I know he is, Lieutenant. I know now that he will be exactly where he said he and I should meet."

"Then why make camp at midday? We should be in pursuit!"

Marya glared. "Don't overreach yourself, Lieutenant. No rank is permanent."

Luca bowed an apology. A fly crept up her neck, tried to slip underneath her leather helmet. She did not bat it away until the captain spoke again.

Marya glanced at the troop. The exchange had apparently gone unheard. She wondered if Luca was the right person for this position, after all. Perhaps no one in the Pellnoran Guard was capable of replacing Calbot.

"We will discuss protocol later, Lieutenant. I will answer your question only because you need to know my plans, and I'd have told you anyway. I'm going to do what I should have done in the first place, what I *would* have done if the regulations concerning vendettas hadn't hampered me. I'm meeting Derik alone. You're in charge until I return."

Luca's eyes went wide. "Captain, if I could—"

"I said *alone*, Lieutenant. I'm the one he's after; his letter said as much. I'll waste no more lives."

"Except your own." Luca bit her lip, lowered her eyes again, but it was too late. The words were spoken. Marya's response was icy.

"Worried the council won't confirm your promotion if I'm killed, Lieutenant? I may be getting long in tooth, but Derik was no match for me two months ago, and he's no match for me now."

"Bother the council!" Luca snapped back, stung by the unjust accusation. "If Derik uses sorcery—"

"We've no proof of that. For B'or's sake, don't stir up the troops with that damned rumor! I'll be back by sunset . . . or not at all." Marya pressed her horse's flanks and moved on, ignoring Luca's salute.

Pursing her lips, Luca observed how stiffly the captain rode, how tense her shoulders were beneath her tunic. Luca had requested assignment to this unit over a year ago because Captain Marya was reputed to be scrupulously fair as well as tough. Until today, the newly promoted lieutenant considered that reputation well-founded.

Calbot's brutal murder obviously hit the captain hard, too hard. Naturally, personal attachments formed between members of the Pellnoran Guard. They were thrown together for weeks or months at a time, held each other's lives in their hands, were isolated physically and psychologically from common folk and even ordinary soldiery. They were the cream. As such, they were expected to put individual considerations aside when these could interfere with duty. Captain Marya often stressed this point.

Perhaps, Luca mused, she'd forgotten it

herself.

The lieutenant watched until her captain vanished at a twist in the path, not once looking back. Well, why should she? Luca turned her own steed around and found herself staring into the impassive face of Sergeant Orvus.

"Something to report, Sergeant?"

"Arm and a leg recovered so far, Lieutenant, just beyond the roadside brush. Our friend Derik was in a hurry. I'm sure we'll find the rest of our scout shortly."

"Good, Sergeant."

"Guard Hargin thinks otherwise. With each find, he has to make the grave that much larger."

Only when Luca laughed did Orvus smile at his own joke.

"It's not my place to say, Lieutenant, but I hope the captain will reconsider Hargin's punishment. He was just letting off a bit of steam. You know how it is when a fellow guard is murdered."

Luca nodded. "I'll put in a word for him, Sergeant, though I'm afraid I don't carry much weight with the captain myself."

"Thank you, Lieutenant. That's all I can ask." Orvus saluted, taking his leave.

"Sergeant?"

He paused. "Yes, Lieutenant?"

Luca cleared her throat. "You were present when that chest was opened. You saw Calbot. I only read the note, later. Was he slain by sorcery? Or was Derik bluffing? It seems incredible that he could have obtained such knowledge in the last two months, yet he never used such talents in his thievery."

The sergeant shifted uncomfortably in his saddle. "That's hard to say."

"Come on, Orvus. Last week we drank together as equals. You're not on trial. I only want an opinion."

"Well," he began.

She leaned forward, smiling encouragingly.

"The nastier wizards are not averse to leaving a filleted human or two lying about in warning. An unpleasant sight, you know. However, the spell itself is not difficult. Of course, I'm speaking from hearsay."

"Of course. Doesn't it take years of study, though, for a would-be sorcerer to perform even simple illusions?"

"Normally. Some take to it naturally. But you needn't know anything, if you've gold enough. It's rare, but not unknown, for former sorcerer's apprentices, who've run away or failed their examinations, to eke out a living with minor magicks. In fact, there was a one-armed lad hanging about the south market place a few weeks back, peddling ancient secrets."

"So Derik could have hired this youth?"

"With sufficient coin. He also could have done the surgery without mystical help. It's time-consuming and tedious, but not beyond one's power if the victim's already dead. Unfortunately, Captain Marya did not take time to arrange an autopsy, so whether the body showed any other signs of violence . . ."

Luca sighed. "In other words, you don't know, either."

Orvus spread his palms helplessly. "I didn't see him killed."

"All right, Sergeant. Return to your duties."

Orvus shifted his stance uneasily.

"Something else?" asked Luca.

"Well, if you're thinking of sending someone to follow the captain—just in case—well, I'm available."

A smile flitted across Luca's lips. "You know me too well, Sergeant. . . . No, I need you here, to supervise in my absence."

Orvus sighed. "I thought you might say that. Still, two would be safer than one. . . ."

Luca shook her head. "I haven't held this rank long, Orvus—and I'm not sure I would miss it much if I lost it. But one of us had better stay in the captain's good graces. If she sees me, but not you . . . then maybe next time you'll get a chance to pull rank on me."

Orvus saluted again and left. Lieutenant Luca gazed up the path that her captain had taken. In the still air, dust settled quickly over the single set of hoofprints.

A line of oaks on her left thinned abruptly, and the murmur that had gradually underscored bird songs and insect hums became a roar. The Targot River appeared in full torrential fury, white foam breaking high over the boulders that dotted its treacherous bed. Here the path widened; it was part of the river's floodplain in the spring. Humus gave way to hard-packed, pebble-strewn surface.

Captain Marya reined up. Summer heat had touched her even in the shaded forest. She removed her leather helmet to wipe her brow, noting with distaste that the inner lining was streaked with black dye. If there had been no need to impress council members and civilians, she would have let her hair gray naturally, for disguising signs of age somehow made them more alarming.

She replaced the helmet and dismounted. Her goal was a five-minute walk farther, so why risk a stone in a hoof at this point? Therefore, she loosened the cinch, allowing her horse to graze and drink in comfort, but did not remove the trappings. She did not expect to be gone long.

She patted the beast's smooth neck, ordering it to wait. As she started walking toward the Targot, Marya felt eyes upon her, which meant that Derik was probably observing her.

Her initial concern was that Derik would try to steal the animal. But then she realized that he would not have such an opportunity. He'd be in for a surprise; a common thief could not twice elude the bite of Captain Marya's steel. She rubbed the haft of her sword reassuringly.

While spray from the rapids spotted her leather breeches, Marya fingered her swordhilt nervously. The blade was fully sheathed, safe from moisture, as was the dagger at her other hip. She did not reach for the second dagger, but she felt it resting at the small of her back, hidden under the tunic.

Keeping to the bank of the Targot gave Marya the widest view, which would help counter any plans Derik had for taking her by surprise as he'd taken Brogan. The disadvantage was that the thundering flow overwhelmed all other sounds, even the crunch of her hard leather soles on the rough road.

She could not possibly hear the footsteps paralleling hers, beyond the screen of oaks to her right.

Marya halted at the spot, knees bent, feet apart, hand on sword, and scanned the path ahead and behind, peering particularly into the woods. Derik must be hiding there. In the afternoon sun, one's sight could not easily penetrate to that which may be hidden within the foliage. Still, Derik would have to cross at least two meters of open ground to reach her. More than enough warning.

It was here that Derik had attempted a daring leap across the Targot River. The best riders in the seven kingdoms would have balked at such a jump, even in winter when the river was at its narrowest. Close pursuit breeds desperate action. Marya could pick out the precise spot where Derik had gone down—or thought she could, which was the same thing. Amazingly, the thief's horse did not drown. They dragged it from the river, but its forelegs were shattered. Marya's own blade ended its agony.

Had it been outrage at this waste of horseflesh, or some deeper instinct, which had urged Marya to camp here then for three days while Lieutenant Calbot directed her troop to search the banks for Derik's waterlogged corpse? She wondered. He was no court traitor or assassin to merit such care in establishing his death, only an ordinary thief whose extraordinary run of good luck had finally given out.

There were still bare spots in the thin grass cover of the cleared patch of forest where she'd struck her tent and waited for word. It was Lieutenant Calbot who'd persuaded her to abandon the search. She agreed because there were no compelling reasons to continue.

Well, Lieutenant, she thought now, I was right and you were wrong. What good does it do either of us?

She whirled suddenly. It was not the scratching of worn leather on stone that alerted her, for that was swallowed in the river's rush, but a slight change in the tenor of that same roaring as Derik's body came between herself and the Targot.

Of course it was Derik, though draped in

a coarse, brown, cotton robe with a cowl that hid his face. Who else would climb from the river to reach a hidden hand toward her throat? Water dripped from the outstretched sleeve, seemed to ooze from every fiber of the garment.

Marya's blade sang out of its sheath. From the folds of his robe came Derik's weapon. Despite his bulky, sodden apparel, he moved quickly, parrying Marya's attack and following with a counterthrust. Marya retreated from the bank. There were fewer stones on the forest side of the road and, therefore, better footing.

Derik kept pace, jabbing whenever her guard seemed to waver. When she held her ground, he halted just out of reach.

"Been waiting long, Derik?"

"I've learned patience, Captain Marya." Derik's voice was thick, lethargic, barely intelligible over the river's roar. He must have suffered some throat injury, likely from the near-drowning. Marya would have to guard against straining to understand the garbled speech. Distraction could be fatal.

"A clever ambush," she admitted. "I suppose you clung to the bank just below the surface, breathing through reeds. Not an easy task in current that swift."

"The Targot and I are intimate."

Marya looked to Derik's feet and posture in order to determine his next move. The soaked robe dragged to the ground; all she could see was one scarred boot. She would have to rely on his weapon's movements. That was a sloppy, dangerous way to judge an opponent, but it was the best clue offered.

"Is that how you escaped last time?"

"If you wish."

Marya grimaced. This conversation led nowhere. What was he waiting for?

"You're a fool, Derik. Even a thief has some small chance for reprieve, and since you were presumed dead, you could have wandered the seven kingdoms freely. Lust for vengeance is your undoing. There's no reprieve for a murderer of two Pellnoran Guards, one an officer."

"Then I've nothing to lose." He lunged.

Marya saw the blade's edge turn at the last moment and caught it with the flat of her own. It still came close enough to score her breeches. She pushed up and away. Derik staggered. Her sword descended and sank solidly, satisfyingly, in her foe's middle. Upon slamming her left foot into his hip, she yanked her sword free. Derik spun, collapsing on his side.

Marya took a deep breath. Another. She knelt beside the fallen man and pulled off her helmet, shaking her short-cropped hair freely. Then she smiled.

"Easier than I thought." She wiped her sword clean on the robe, noticing that the weapon was stained not with blood, but with a foul, gray-green ichor.

Something gripped her ankle; she felt its chill through thick leather. Dropping the helmet, she turned to slash at whatever snared her. Derik pulled. Marya's stroke went wide as she sprawled on her back. The hilt of her spare dagger pressed painfully on her spine.

Derik rose to his knees. His grip on her ankle was firm; his other hand retained the sword. Marya blocked the killing stroke millimeters from her neck, but it took all her strength in that awkward position to hold death at bay. Only Derik's reluctance to free her ankle kept him from bettering his leverage and ending her life.

Marya's uncaptured leg shot up, the bony knee smashing into Derik's crotch. The force alone was enough to unbalance him. She rolled free as he toppled. A moment later Marya was on her feet, trying to ignore the muscle strain in her sword arm.

Incredibly, Derik regained his footing before she could strike again. Her blow should have left him writhing for minutes—unless she hadn't hit him where she'd thought.

"Those damned robes!" she gasped. "Too bulky to allow a clean blow, and I can't risk entangling my sword with a surer stroke!"

Derik seemed to nod as his blade licked out. Marya's parry was slow, but she'd been moving back. The weapons barely touched. Water from Derik's robe made her tunic cling uncomfortably, and this gave her an idea.

"That sodden cloth must be a hindrance, though. Doesn't that extra weight press on your back, weary your arm? . . ."

"No." He jabbed. A red line appeared along her ribs, under the slashed tunic.

So much for psychology, Marya decided as her battle-trained body rushed into the opening Derik's attack had left. This time she aimed higher, and the weapon cut deep where cowl met robe. This time Derik landed face down.

A drop of sweat hung from her nose-tip. She brushed it off and straddled the prone form. With both hands on her sword, she stabbed down until the weapon's tip scraped the stony path. She added a vicious twist, withdrew the blade, and rolled Derik onto his back with her foot.

"Fool me once. . . ."

The sentence faded on her lips. Half the cowl dangled loose, exposing the left side of Derik's face. The flesh resembled raw meat, save where ivory bone protruded. Marya froze. The rapids could do this and more to a body trapped in the current, smashed against the rocky bed and bank. But how could Derik have survived such a battering?

He turned his head to look at her.

Captain Marya backed off in shock as Derik pulled himself erect. His sword still jutted from the right sleeve, was held in a grip of iron. His free hand pulled down the remainder of the cowl. The right side of his face had even less skin, and the back of the head was naught but his skull and three stubborn clumps of colorless hair.

Marya swallowed to regain her voice. "You can't be alive. Not like that."

"No. I can't." Derik spread his arms; his sleeve slid back to reveal an equally skeletal structure to his hands and forearms. Marya saw the filigree on the swordhilt for the first time.

"That's Lieutenant Calbot's weapon."

"And he belonged to you. There's a balance."

Captain Marya was no stranger to sorcery; she knew that what she saw was not possible. Any trained necromancer could reanimate a corpse, but none she'd ever heard of could restore the dead mind. Always the revenant was an empty shell, a puppet of limited uses.

Supporting herself against a tree, its bark cut through her tunic and scraped her back. She forced the terror to the bottom of her mind. To battle the impossible required different tactics. Forget the ordinary killing stroke. She had to cripple Derik, cut him to pieces. It could be done, if she did not falter from exhaustion while battling the untiring dead.

First she had to see what she was doing.

With a snarl, Marya pushed away from the oak, twisting to one side. Her sword sliced the robe at waist height from stomach to spine, barely touching Derik. He swung awkwardly, surprised by the unorthodox attack. The flat of his blade smacked her shoulder, numbing her sword arm to the fingers. But she did not drop her weapon nor even slow until once more beyond his reach.

Following, Derik stumbled over the torn, hanging cloth. Marya moved in. Derik recovered. She dodged back as his sword lashed out. Quickly, Derik shrugged off the robe. His thin frame seemed held together by odd chunks of flesh, tendon, and viscera. Marya unconsciously took another step backward.

Derik chuckled. "Losing your nerve? I thought Captain Marya of the Pellnoran Guard never showed fear."

"I fear nothing!"

Derik snorted. "What terror do you see in my shape, Captain? Is it death? *Your* doom?"

Marya's move had torn wider the cut on her side, and a bruise would soon appear at her right shoulder. She fought to block the pain, keep up her guard. "I shall not shun my fate . . . when the time comes."

"Might that time not be now?"

"Not at your desiccated hands, thief!"

"Why not? There *is* one thing you fear, Captain: growing old."

She closed her eyes, but only for an instant, not long enough to give Derik an advantage. "Nonsense."

"Captain Marya. Always in command. So self-possessed. You know I speak the truth. Your powers are waning. You can hardly

catch your breath. Your arms ache after a few minutes of swordplay. You color your hair to hide the gray, use special salves to disguise wrinkles—"

Marya growled and attacked. Her weapon bit through a gobbet of thigh muscle, scraped the bone beneath. Derik sliced open her sword arm. Marya gasped and tightened her sweat-slick fingers. Her left hand whipped out the dagger at her side, and she plunged it into Derik's chest.

He staggered but stayed erect. He was learning to brace himself better, even though Marya's blows were weakening. He did not bother to remove the dagger.

Marya paused out of reach, free hand clamped over the fresh cut, trying to staunch the blood that oozed between her fingers. Derik laughed.

"You see? What happens in a few summers, Captain, when your legs become so feeble you cannot climb a flight of stairs? When you cannot even rise from bed without help? When your body betrays you with incontinence?"

Marya blanched at the thought of such humiliations. "No! I am in good health! I will not age gracelessly!"

"That's not what you told your lieutenant."

Marya licked her lips, tasting salty sweat. Yes, she had confessed her secret fears to Lieutenant Calbot during a long and stressful siege on an assassins' den. She hadn't meant to, but Calbot was, after all, trustworthy.

"So you've stolen his memory as well as his sword."

"You'd be amazed at what I've gained from your aide." Derik lowered the sword a centimeter. "Or would you? Come, Captain. Submit, and you need never fear becoming ancient and helpless. You will be spared the indignities of such an ending. Drop the sword. I will be swift."

"Yes." Marya's blade scraped the ground. Derik closed, poised for the fatal stroke. She saw the razor-sharp edge catch the light of the afternoon sun.

"No!" she screamed, racing forward, slashing at his leg while her free hand reached to retrieve the dagger. Derik's icy fingers circled her left forearm. Revolted by the touch, Marya slammed the pommel against his wrist. There was a sharp snap. She plummeted on, nearly falling.

When Marya turned, Derik was staring at his left hand, which hung, limp and useless, by a tendon. She hurried back, sword arcing high. Now she knew what she must do.

Derik forgot his disabled hand as he warded off a flurry of thrusts and slashes. Again and again Marya slipped under his guard, and although he knew she could do little real harm, he was forced to retreat simply to keep enough distance between them for his own attack.

The Targot's roar filled his ears. She was trying to force him into the river! "Foolish captain! I'll only climb out again!"

Marya did not reply.

Scrambling for footing, Derik swung wide, and Marya had the opening she wanted. She threw her sword aside and drove her unbruised shoulder into Derik's stomach, ignoring the fetor from his burst intestines. Derik sprawled again on the ground.

Lungs burning with each breath, Marya jammed a knee into his ribs, snapping one off and cutting her thigh on the ragged end. Her hands griped a stone the size of a man's skull. It was almost too heavy to lift with an injured arm, but that's what she wanted. Tears of agony and strain blinded her as she struggled with the clumsy weight. Then she brought it down on the elbow joint of Derik's sword arm. An unnerving crunch rewarded her, and Calbot's sword slipped from those dead fingers at last.

Derik hissed. "What . . . are you . . . doing?"

"Did I hurt you, Derik? I thought dead men were beyond pain!" She pushed herself off his chest, spun around, lifted the stone again, and crushed his right kneecap.

"Ack! This won't . . . help . . . Submit. . . ."

Snap! A bone of the left knee popped free, bouncing into the river. Derik's limbs flapped at bizarre angles.

"You'll . . . regret . . . your—"

The rock slipped from her fingers. She missed the skull, but shattered the jawbone. Close enough, for it shut him up.

Marya sat heavily beside her foe, oblivious to the stones that jabbed her buttocks. Her tears were of relief now. She gulped in oxygen. She wiped her cheek with a bloodied hand, streaking her face red, and watched Derik's jerking form go still. The pounding of her heart was louder than the rapids.

When her breathing steadied, she tried to stand, but the movement made her dizzy. Instead, she crawled to the bank and lay on her stomach, sucking air sharply as she dipped her wounded arm into the frigid water. When the cut was sufficiently clean, she tore a strip from her tunic for a bandage and tied another about her midriff for the less serious slash along her ribs.

Now she wanted her sword again. First, though, she wanted Calbot's for burial with his remains. She looked to where Derik lay. Yes, there it was, but whose meaty hand was encircling its hilt?

"Damn!" swore the thick-set, square-jawed man. "I didn't want you to see."

Marya looked up with a gasp. "Lieutenant Calbot!"

Calbot shrugged. "Well, it was a sentimental gesture, anyway. Doesn't really matter." He limped toward her.

"Lieutenant, thank B'or you're alive! Are you hurt?"

"It'll pass. I didn't realize a mental link could work both ways. When those kneecaps went . . ."

Marya rose to greet him, but her legs would not cooperate. The best she could do was sit up. "I think I understand. Well, you're free of Derik's sorcery now, Lieutenant. I'd appreciate your helping me to my horse."

Calbot towered over her. His lips curled sadly. "You're making this difficult."

"It's not hard, Lieutenant. Give me your hand."

He ignored her gesture. "That thing you called Derik couldn't control a fly. I controlled him. I was his voice."

Marya's hand sank back in her lap. "Lieutenant, you're still befogged. Derik used you to get close enough to Brogan to kill him, but he knew your loyalty to me was too strong to overcome. Besides, he wanted the satisfaction of killing me himself."

"I killed Brogan. My idea. Too bad, since he wasn't a bad fellow at gaming."

Marya felt overheated, despite the shredded tunic and the chill river water that still beaded her right arm. "That can't be. You . . . I chose you to succeed me. I groomed you to take over my captaincy."

Calbot sneered. "After how many years, Captain? How long was I to remain Marya's pet? That's what the troops called me! I could have had the promotion two summers ago, but you would neither step down nor authorize a transfer."

"You weren't ready."

"Chaos I wasn't! You just don't want to let go!"

Marya looked at the foaming river. "I can't believe this conversation. I will not believe it. Derik's sorcery scrambled your wits. The palace wizard will undo that. Say nothing to the others at camp, and they'll never know."

Calbot shook his head. "Strong, infallible Captain Marya. You always have to be right. You can't even imagine that someone could tire of your posturing, that a man *you* selected would get his fill of the taste of your boots."

The captain glowered up at him. "You've said enough, Lieutenant."

He grinned. "Yes, I'd decided there'd been enough talk some time ago. That's why I hid Derik's body in a cave and told you the search was futile. That's why I also paid my life savings to a one-armed former necromancer's apprentice from Camarck, so he would animate the corpse and teach me how to use it. Not that he got much enjoyment from my money. I knew you'd be too eager to avenge me to examine *my* body and discover it was short a limb. Then, when I had to kill Brogan, I decided to mutilate the carcass, just in case."

"You're not making any sense, Lieutenant. I advise you to hold your tongue. I'm retiring from the field this coming winter. You can still have my command."

"As you retired last year? And the year before? 'Fool me once,' you said not long ago. No, Captain. I'm arranging your immediate and permanent retirement."

His blade lifted for the death blow.

"You're being fool— Lieutenant! Put up your sword!"

"That's right, don't look directly at me, that makes it easi—" Calbot's jaw sagged. His sword dropped from nerveless fingers halfway through its descent. He looked down. A centimeter of cold sharp steel protruded from his chest, with a red trickle beneath it staining his tunic. When he attempted to speak, blood spattered his lips.

Calbot sank to his knees before his captain, then he slipped sideways. One arm dangled in the Targot, its lifeless fingers waving in the current.

Marya stifled an unbidden moan. She reached forward, pressing the back of her hand to the dead man's cheek. Already, warmth was fleeing. Gently, she closed the lids of his glassy, unseeing eyes.

"Are you all right, Captain?" asked Lieutenant Luca as she cleaned fresh blood from her blade.

Captain Marya's face turned from pale ivory to crimson, almost purple. Outrage gave her the strength to stagger to her feet. "You're on report for disobeying orders!"

Luca started to smile, bit her lip to stifle the impulse. The captain was not joking. She rarely did. "You put me in charge in your absence. I used my discretion."

"You abused your position, Lieutenant. Make that Sergeant. You ignored a direct order!"

"Out of concern for your safety and loyalty to the unit. And you did not explicitly forbid me to follow!"

"Chaos with that! I mean now, when I ordered you to put up your weapon!"

"*My* weapon? Weren't you speaking to Calbot?"

"Calbot was helping me to my feet."

"Calbot was helping you to your grave!"

Marya took a shaky step forward. "Sergeant, you're in trouble enough as it is. Killing a fellow officer is treason, punishable by quartering!"

Luca could not trust herself to reply. She turned and walked several paces, stepping around Derik's ruined remains, counting slowly to twenty. Then she looked back.

"Captain, I am as shocked by Lieutenant Calbot's duplicity as you, but I heard what he said and how he said it. Perhaps you heard it differently, through witchery or wishing, but he fully intended to kill you."

Marya's legs felt like damp cloth, but they carried her to Luca's side. "I order you to be silent."

"He was right about one thing: You can't admit you made a mistake. You can't deal with the fact that your hand-picked successor betrayed you!"

Marya slapped the sergeant, not as hard as she'd intended. The sting only fueled Luca's anger. The hand still holding the unsheathed sword began to shake. Luca willed the trembling to cease, then turned again to march down the road.

Marya tried to keep pace, saw it was beyond her, stood in the center of the road and screeched, "You're under arrest, *Sergeant* Luca! Put yourself in Sergeant Orvus's custody! I'll see you at your court-martial!"

Luca spun around. "We'll see who's on trial. . . . Captain! Beware! Watch out!" The ex-lieutenant said no more, saving her breath for combat.

Marya sneered at such a childish prank, even as she thought, I've pushed her too far. Calbot was an unlikely traitor, but Luca? Yes, always pushing, testing her limits. Why else would the woman now run toward her, blade swinging, face twisted in loathing?

Marya cursed. She had forgotten to pick up her own sword. Still, Luca would find no easy prey. Marya's left hand slipped behind her back.

Luca was almost upon her when Marya's dagger flashed from its hiding place, the razor edge slicing deep and clean into belly. Luca stumbled, dropped her weapon, scrabbled with both hands to keep her insides inside. Marya put out her arms to ward her off, and Luca collapsed against her.

The dying woman's eyes were wide. A single word hung on her lips, but she could not speak it.

"The guilty are most eager to accuse, eh?" mocked Marya. "Thought yourself a match for your captain? You? Your blade didn't even come close! What a poor reflection on *my* training!"

Luca shook her head. Her eyes drifted from the captain's hard features to gaze past her shoulder. "De . . . de . . ." The pupils dilated, then dulled.

"Dead you are," Marya muttered. Unable to support Luca's full weight, Marya let her fall, twisting out of the body's path. As she turned, she saw at last what Luca'd seen.

A groan escaped her.

Derik's shattered body was moving again. Incapable of standing, he crawled on thighbone and elbow. Derik still could crush Marya's windpipe with a heavy bone, crack her skull with his, or even smother her in his rotting flesh.

At this point, she lacked the strength to wield even a fist-sized stone effectively.

Captain Marya knelt beside the woman she'd killed, realizing now the true target of Luca's charge and why her blade had been so wide of the mark. "Derik," she said to the dead woman. "Your dying word was *Derik*. Why in Chaos didn't you say so before?"

Luca always had taken too much for granted.

Marya still held the bloody dagger. She pointed it at the creeping obscenity. She would go down fighting.

Her features went slack. Derik had only *seemed* to be crawling toward her, hampered by his awkward locomotion.

"No, damn you! This way! Finish it!"

Derik plunged from the river bank to sink without a trace in the swirling Targot. The corpse had been freed from Calbot's control at the latter's death, but it remained animate. With no necromancer handy to cancel the spell, there was but one way for the revenant to know rest: Derik's mindless shell returned to its grave.

Captain Marya could no longer deny to herself the reality of Calbot's attempt on her life and the tragic error that Luca had paid for in blood. She ached, then, to follow Derik. How easy it would be! Let Sergeant Orvus untangle the mystery of what had happened, if he could.

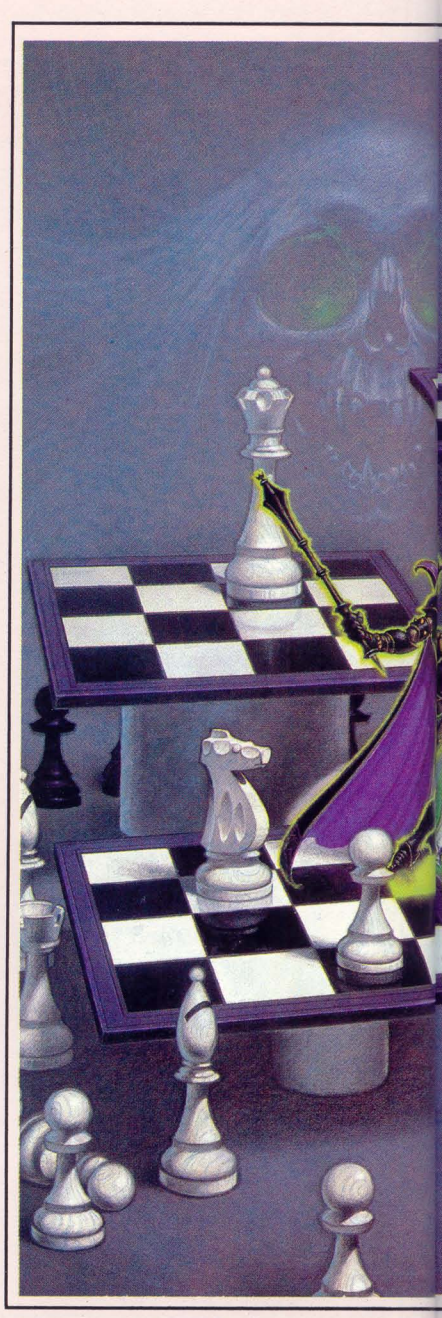
Yet Captain Marya made no move toward those tempting rapids. She had not gained her proud reputation by shirking her responsibilities; she would not end her career by doing so. This was her mess.

Slowly, like an old and ailing woman, Captain Marya struggled to her feet. Her horse was waiting.

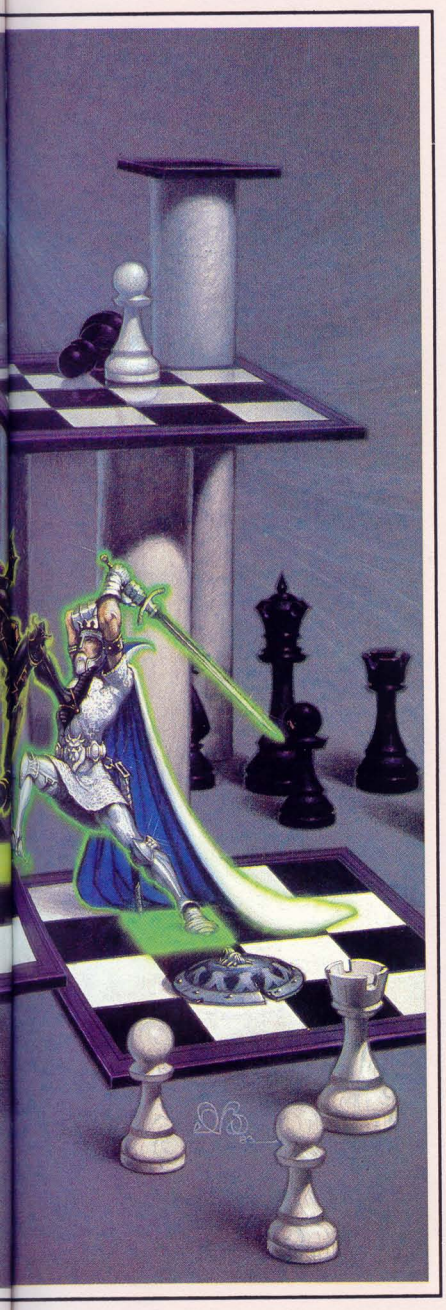
Player Characters

King of the Cats, by Jerry Eaton, illustration for a Celtic tale

Checkmate, #83, Denis Beauvais



Stalemate, #86, Denis Beauvais

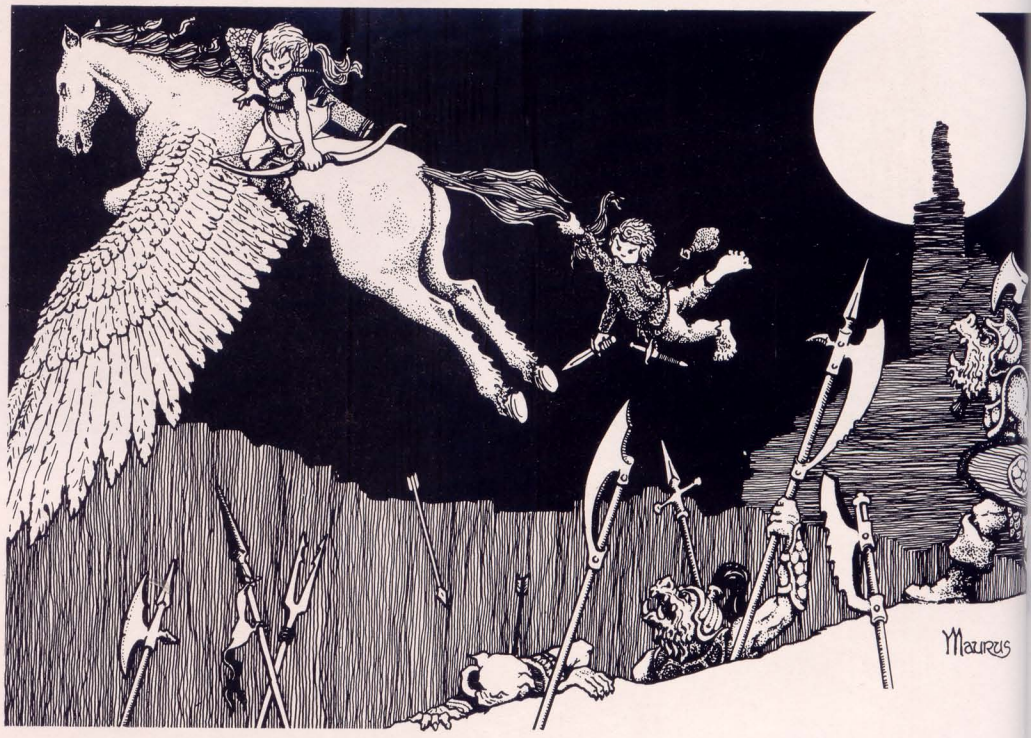


Check, #89, Denis Beauvais

Left—Ivan the Simpleton, as visualized by Ernest Yates for the story "Fortunes of a Fool," by Nicholas Yermakov

Bottom left—Roger Raupp brings a female dwarf, with pride in her beard, to life

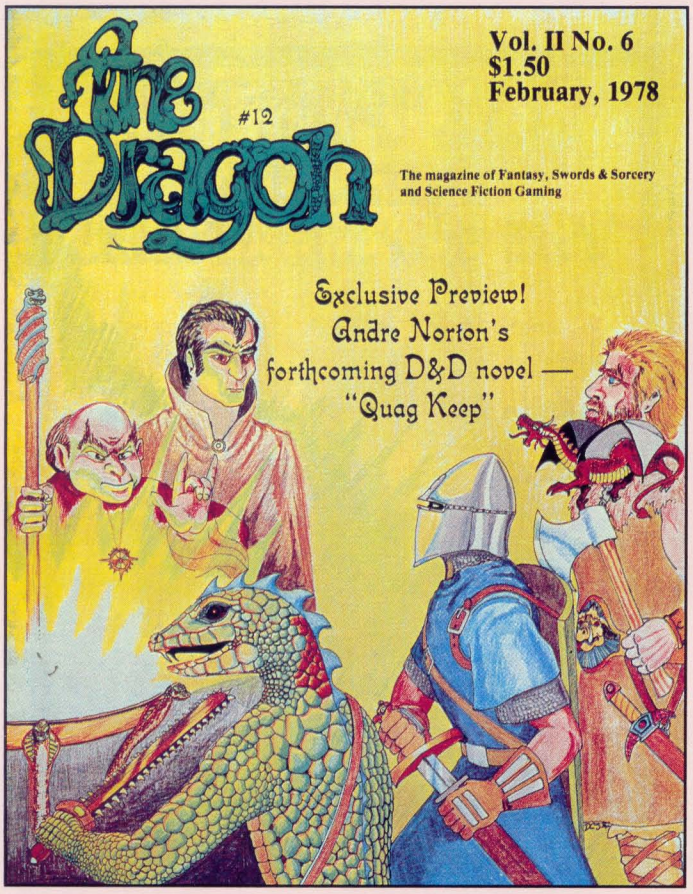
Below—A pegasus is a useful escape vehicle in adventures held in the open air; by Bob Maurus



#73, Susan Shay

Mythos and Logos, #6, Morno

The Finzer Family, Bill Hannon

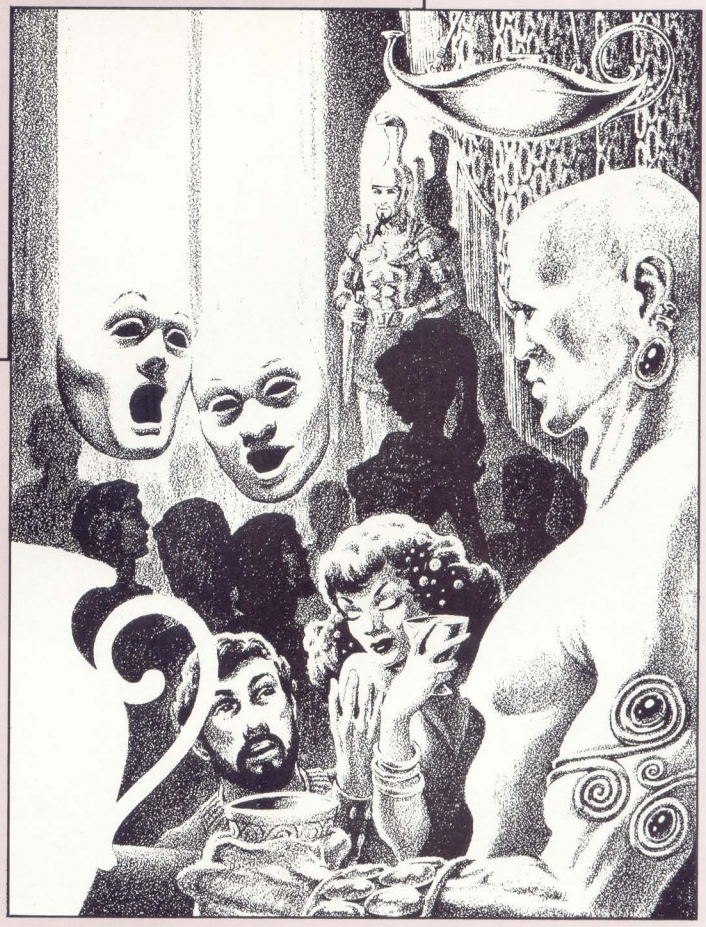


Quag Keep, Dave Sutherland

The Thing from the Tomb, unidentified artist

Untitled, #45, Dean Morrissey

Jeff Busch's illustration for a feature story on the thief player-characters—rogues in the night



The strange, magical singing heads that appear to patrons of Slab's Tavern in John Gregory Betancourt's story "On the Rocks at Slab's," as rendered by George Barr

Someone an adventurer would prefer not to meet on a dark night; drawn by Stephan Peregrine for Robert S. Babcock's story, "Dennim and the Golem"

A dark elf of Erol Otus's imagining

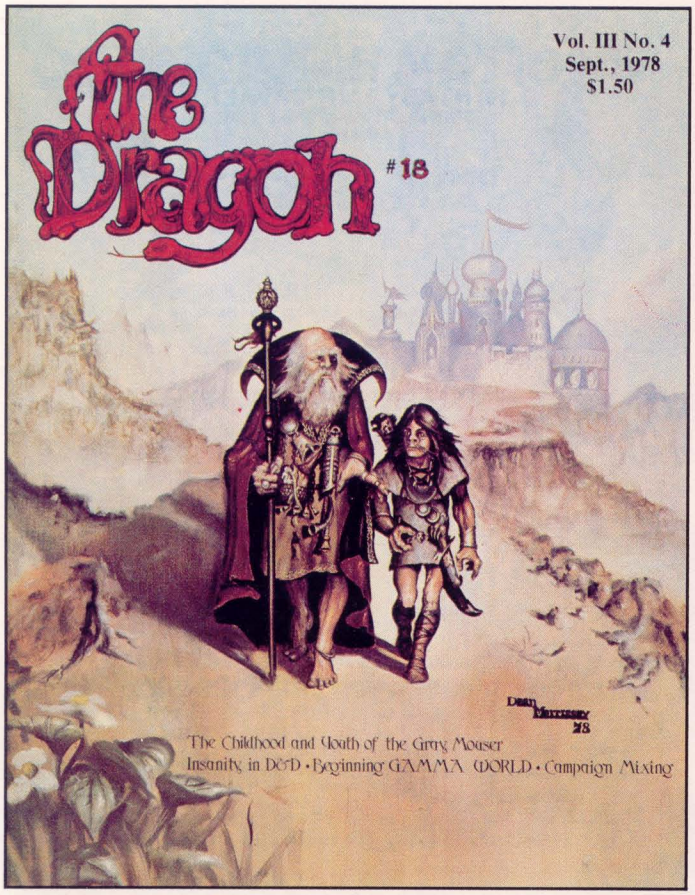
Top left—Steve Swenston's illustration for the story "The Next-to-Last Mistake" by Paul McHugh

Above—Valerie A. Valusek's illustration for Ama Darr Rogan's story, "Inglaf's Dream"

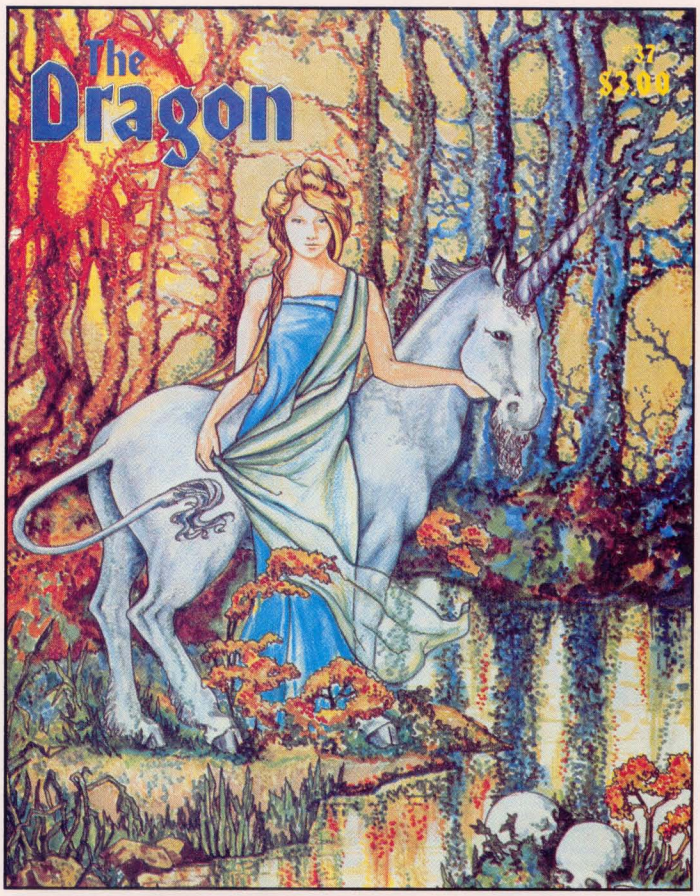
Left—Stephan Peregrine's illustration for J.B. Allen's story "Doomsgame"

Right—When numbers meet power, the outcome is uncertain; #62, by Larry Elmore

ELMORE



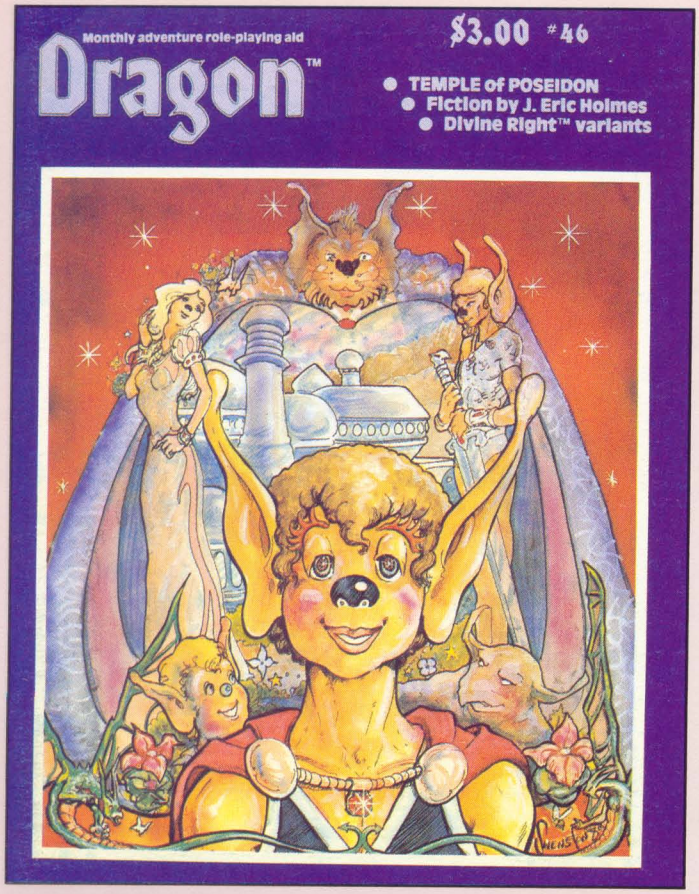
Fafhrd and the Grey Mouser, Dean Morrissey



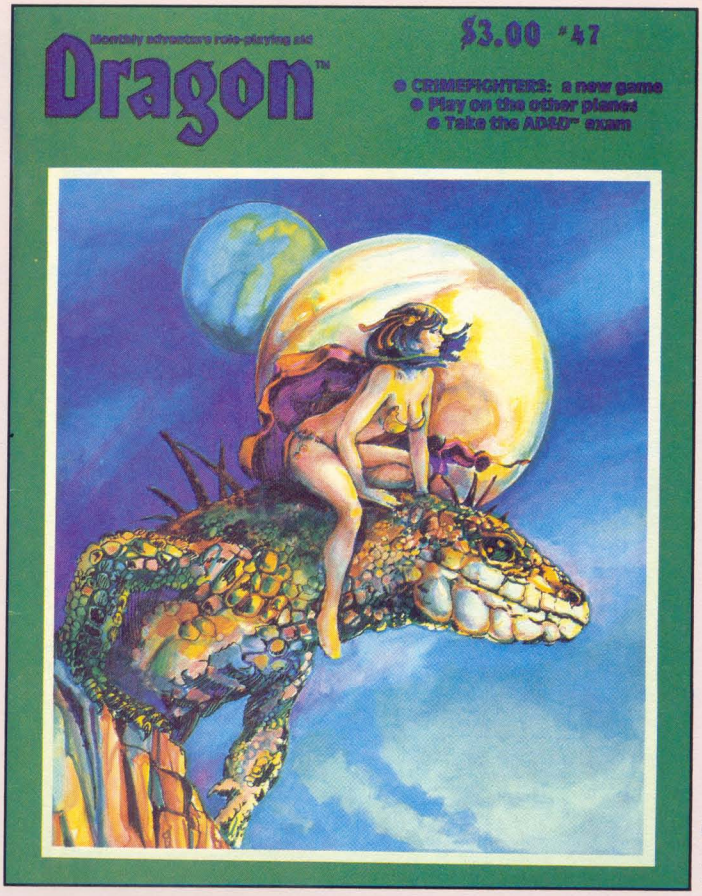
Jasmine, Darlene

The only two-sided DRAGON® Magazine cover, David A. Trampier

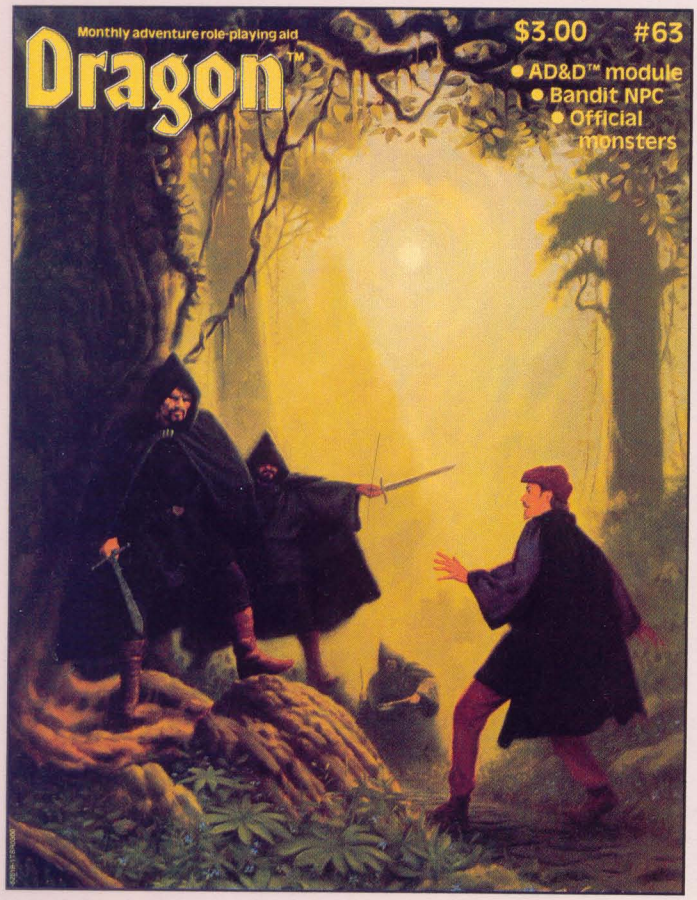
Natalia, Dean Morrissey



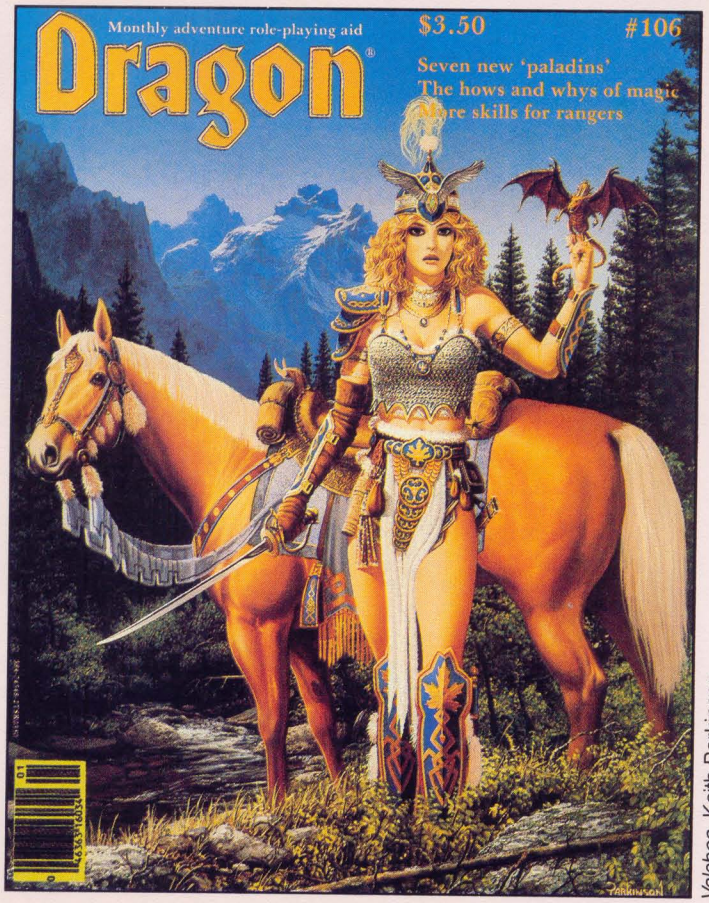
Pinsom, Steve Swenston



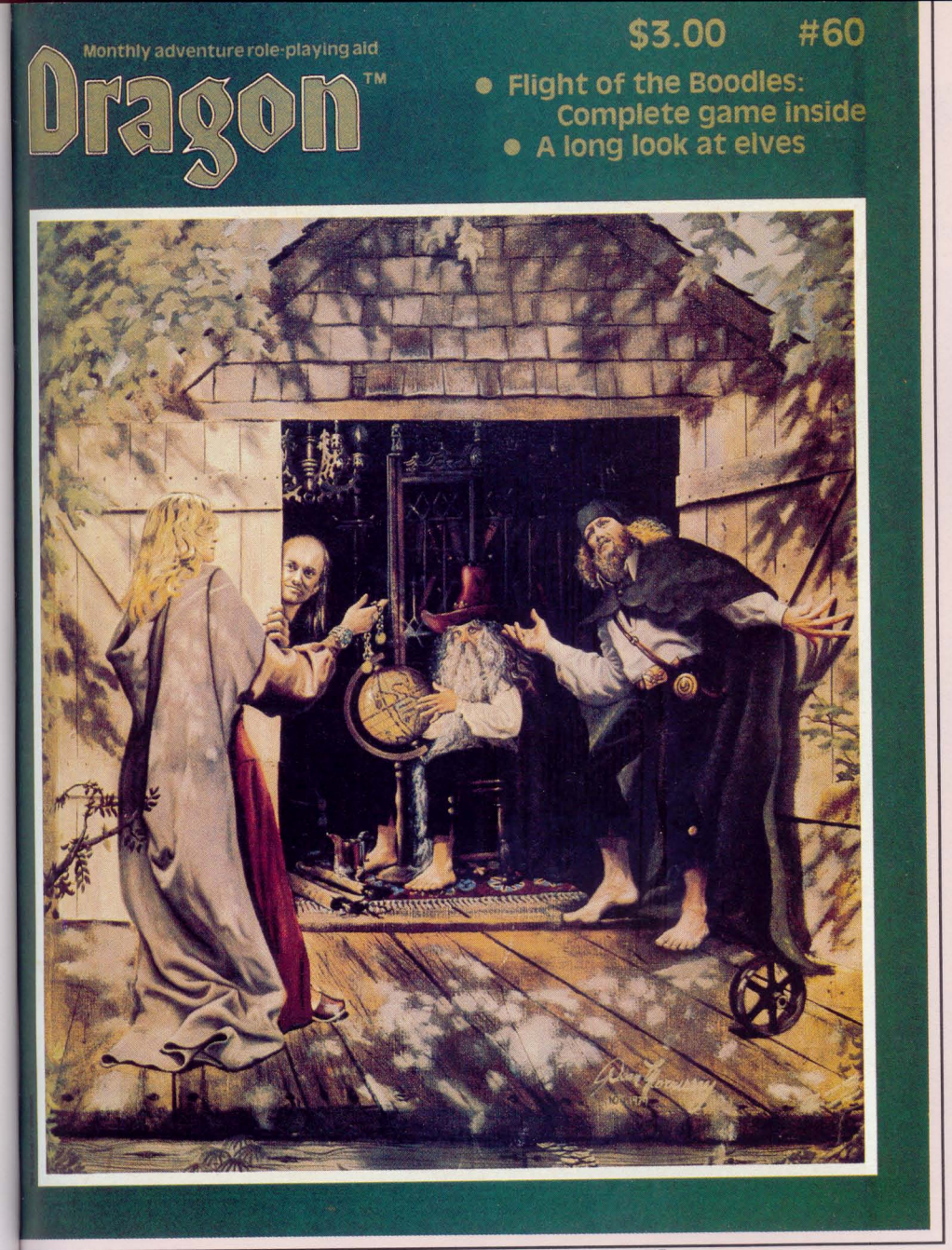
John Blumen



James Warhola



Valshea, Keith Parkinson



Left—Won't You Come In?, Dean Morrissey

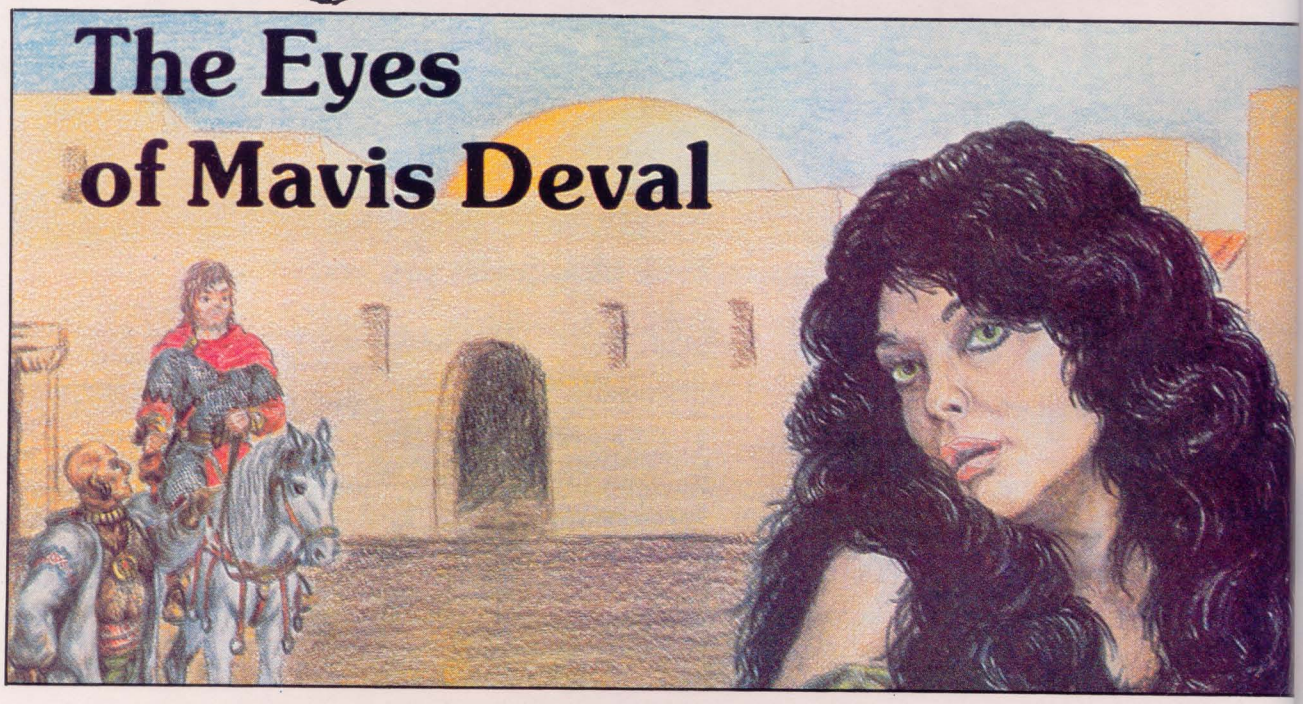
Below—Derwen, the wandering female bard, by James Edward Faulkenberg, for Josepha Sherman's story, "The Grey Stones"

Bottom—The skills a fantasy character may need are many. Here, Bob Maurus shows a forger at work

Left—Appearing to be intelligent is at least as important as *being* intelligent; by Bob Maurus

Above—The character who would grow in his magic-using ability must study and research the fundamentals of his trade; by Paul Jaquays in one of the first illustrations to appear in DRAGON® Magazine #1

Below—Jeffrey Lanners' art drawing the reader into a Gardner Fox story



Places

Ian Dinwood's Martian Moment, #84, Dean Morrissey

Great Stoney
Build Your Own Cardboard Castle

In issue #86, an article by Arthur Collins, a frequent contributor to DRAGON® Magazine, described in detail the construction of The High Keep of the Grand Chapter of the Order of St. Raphael, a fortified monastery which became known as Great Stoney.

Artist Dennis Kauth, skilled in working in three dimensions, took Collins's pen-and-ink floor plans of the eight-story structure and turned them into a cardboard sculpture, making only those changes necessary to convert the two-dimensional graph-paper drawings to shapes that could be squeezed onto four sheets of cardboard, cut out, and formed into a castle.

The following text, describing how to put the cut-out castle together, was written by Kim Mohan, former editor of DRAGON® Magazine. The line drawings as well as the full-color castle itself were created by Dennis Kauth.

HOW IT ALL GOES TOGETHER

THE BASICS

In addition to the cardboard pages from the center of this book, you'll need:

A 12-inch ruler or straightedge, preferably metal.

A pair of sharp, pointed scissors, not too big (so you can wield them easily).

A modeling knife with a sharp blade.

A tube or bottle of high-quality glue for paper.

A ball-point pen (one without ink is okay) or some other object to use as a stylus for scoring along fold lines.

Paperclips, spring-type clothespins, or similar items that can be used to hold parts together while the glue dries.

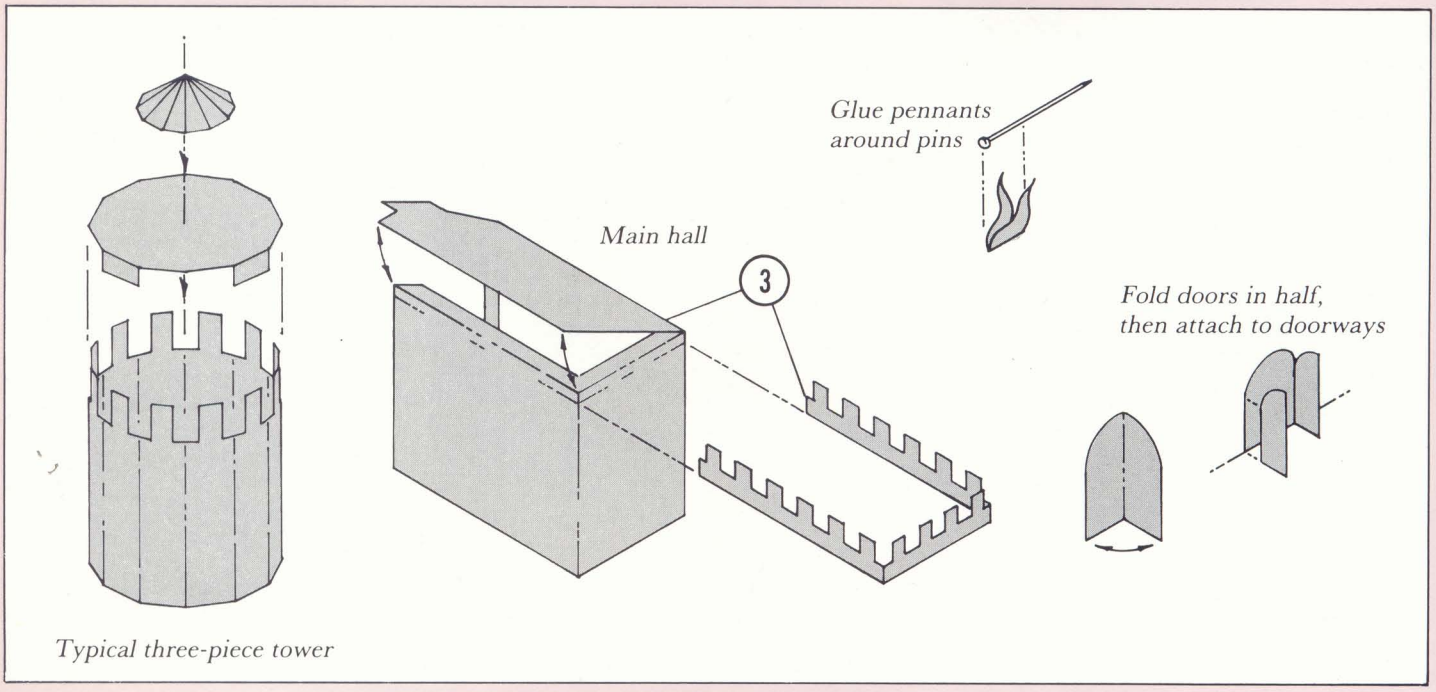
1. Separate the cardboard pages along the perforations at the center of the book. The best way to do this without damaging the paper is to hold the straightedge to the perforations and run the modeling knife along them.

2. Cut the pages apart into smaller sections for easier handling. Cut out the base first; this is the part that will hold all of the others, except for the small outbuildings (which have their own small bases).

3. Cut out the individual parts of the castle, one at a time as needed; notice that parts and groups of parts are numbered in the order of assembly. If you have a steady hand, you can use scissors for most of the long and straight edges. To cut out small detailed areas, such as the crenellations on the tops of the walls, a modeling knife and a straightedge to guide it are the best tools for true and accurate cuts.

4. Using the stylus and straightedge, score each part along the black lines to make folding easier. (The black lines are only printed on the colored surface, but if you score the parts on that surface the colors might "break up." It's safest to do the scoring on the nonprinted side, as long as you line the straightedge carefully before scoring each line.)

5. Fold each part so that it forms the three-dimensional shape it's supposed to, then apply glue to the surfaces that will touch (only one surface, or both, depending on the kind of glue you use) so the part will stay in that shape. Refer to the schematic drawings to see how certain types of parts are constructed. If you're using a fast-setting glue, be sure the parts are aligned properly the first time you touch the connecting



Typical three-piece tower

surfaces. If you're using a slow-setting glue, you may find it handy to clamp surfaces together with paperclips or clothespins until the glue dries.

6. Attach each part in its proper place, either on the base or on another part. Put down the center tower first, then the "cloverleaf" towers (#2) around it, then the great hall (location #3), then the chapel (#4) and so on, working your way toward the perimeter of the castle. Attach small parts as you go along to avoid being hemmed in later by other parts; for instance, put the doors on the great hall before gluing down the two walls that run parallel to the hall.

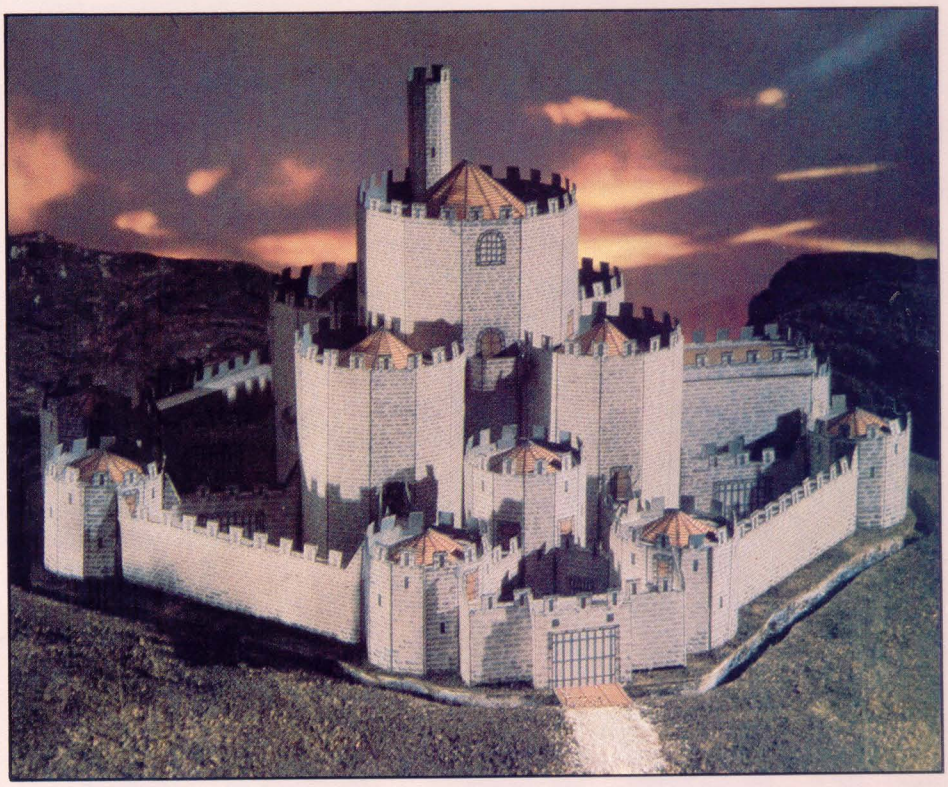
SPECIAL INSTRUCTIONS

Doors: Many of the doors of Great Stoney are designed to be shown in the opened position. Each of the open-door pieces is actually half of a door. As you cut each one out, fold it in half and glue it to make a piece that's colored on both sides (see the diagram). Then, using a very small amount of glue, attach each half to the side of an open doorway. The door halves labeled #3 go at the base of the central tower and on the great hall. The door labeled #1 is for the doorway leading from the central tower to the roof of part #5. The doors labeled #9 go at the base of each of the outer wall towers.

Outbuildings: Because a castle often had such things in its vicinity (and because we had a little extra room on the cardboard sheets), we've provided three outbuildings, each in one piece, that can be folded and attached to their own small bases and then displayed outside the castle walls in any location you choose.

Balconies: The parts labeled B (on the sheet containing the base) are used to form the balconies that jut off the central tower along the tops of the cloverleaf towers. For added support and to be sure they're aligned properly, it's best to attach them after the cloverleaf towers are in place.

Tower roofs: Most of the flat roof sections that fit inside the cylindrical tower pieces should be fixed to the insides of the cylinders so that each roof is about 1/16 inch below the battlement. Exceptions are the roofs on the cloverleaf towers, which fit somewhat lower inside the cylinders so they'll be at the right height when the cloverleaf towers are fitted against and under the central tower. Whenever you're not sure how two pieces are supposed to fit together, try them on for size before applying any glue. The conical timber roof on each tower is designed to fit over the uncolored area in the center of the flat roof piece—there is no need to cut out the uncolored sections, and the structure will be weakened if you do so. Each of the timber roofs on the cloverleaf towers is marked with a small notch that must be cut out to make the roof fit snugly against the central tower.



In the months following the appearance of Great Stoney, photographer Mike Sitkiewicz assembled his own castle, surrounded it with terrain (complete with the obligatory moat), and photographed it against projected backgrounds that gave the miniature castle an amazing realism.

ADVANCED TIPS

Anyone who's experienced at scratch-building and detail work will think of several ways to make Great Stoney even more realistic-looking. Here are a few of our ideas.

With a couple of pieces of small chain and four straight pins, you can build the drawbridge (door part #11) in a partly open position. Cut the chain to fit, then "bolt" it to the door and the wall with straight pins, clipping off the shaft of the pin with pliers or scissors. Wherever straight pins are used in the construction, try to get the type with colored heads that will match the color of the part the pin is used with.

The pennants fluttering from the higher towers are made by folding and gluing each paper pennant around a straight pin, then poking the pin through the black dot in each roof piece. To keep the pins at the proper heights, stick each one in the roof and fix it in place with a spot of glue before attaching the roof to the tower. For added realism and a custom touch, design your own pennants, and try cutting them out of cloth—but first, seal the cloth with liquid glue to keep the edges from fraying.

By working very carefully, you can cut out any doors or windows you think should be opened; likewise, for the portcullis gates along many of the walls. Simulate bars and latticework with thin wire attached to the inner surfaces of the wall or tower in question. As with many detailing projects, you should finish this work before proceeding with the construction of the part being detailed—for instance, it would be very tough to cut out the windows on the central tower after the central tower is attached to the base.

The stable area offers several opportunities for detailing. You can build hitching posts from toothpicks, and feed troughs from cardboard or balsa. Use flocking material or fibers of twine, or check out the spice and herb rack in the kitchen, for something that looks like straw.

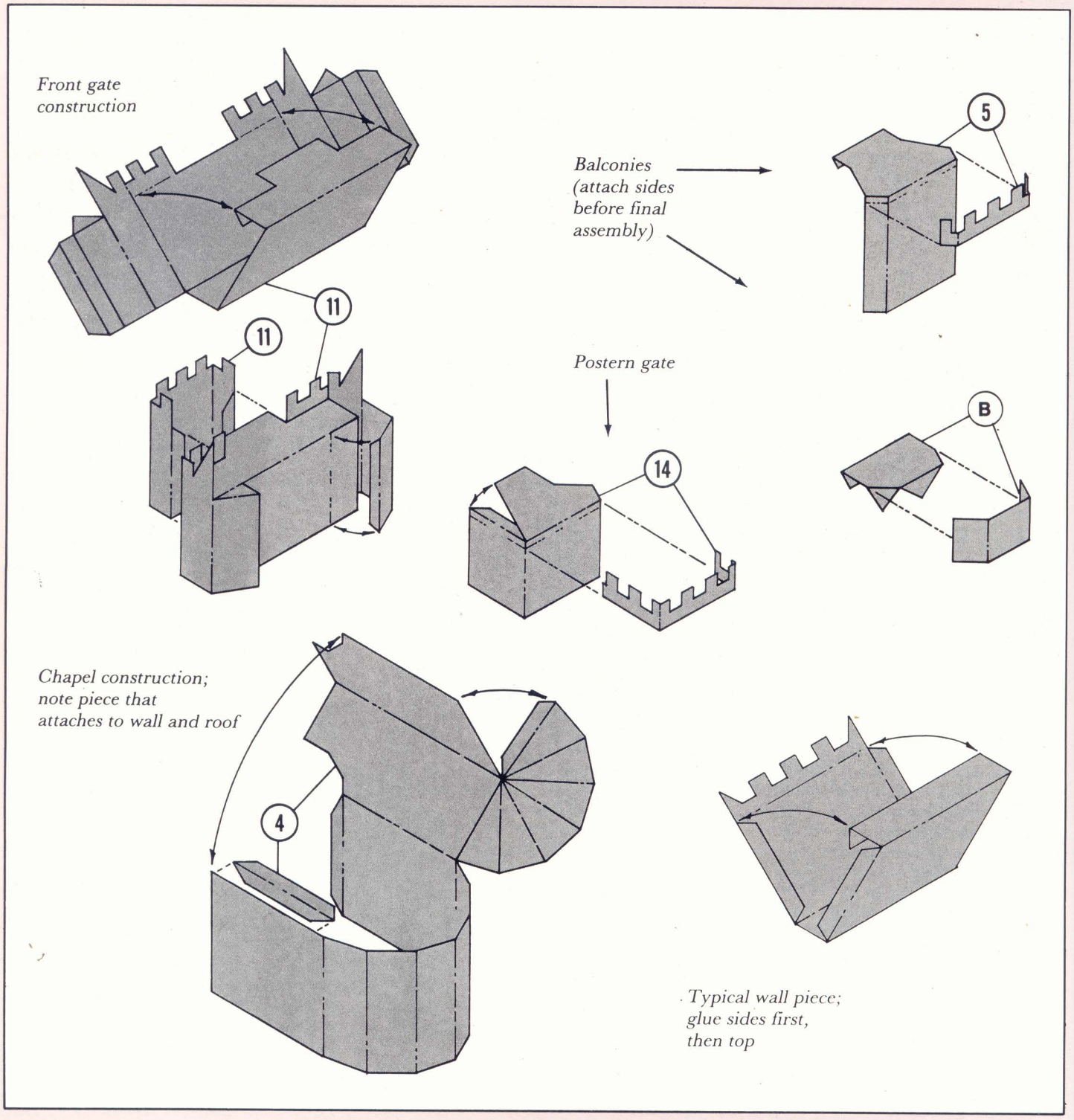
Because the printed sheets are not colored on both sides, several uncolored areas will be visible on the finished product—particularly on the inside surfaces of walls and battlements. You can fix this by coloring those surfaces with a felt-tip marker in a shade of gray that will match the exterior. Markers will also be handy for covering up places on the exterior that get slightly damaged during construction.

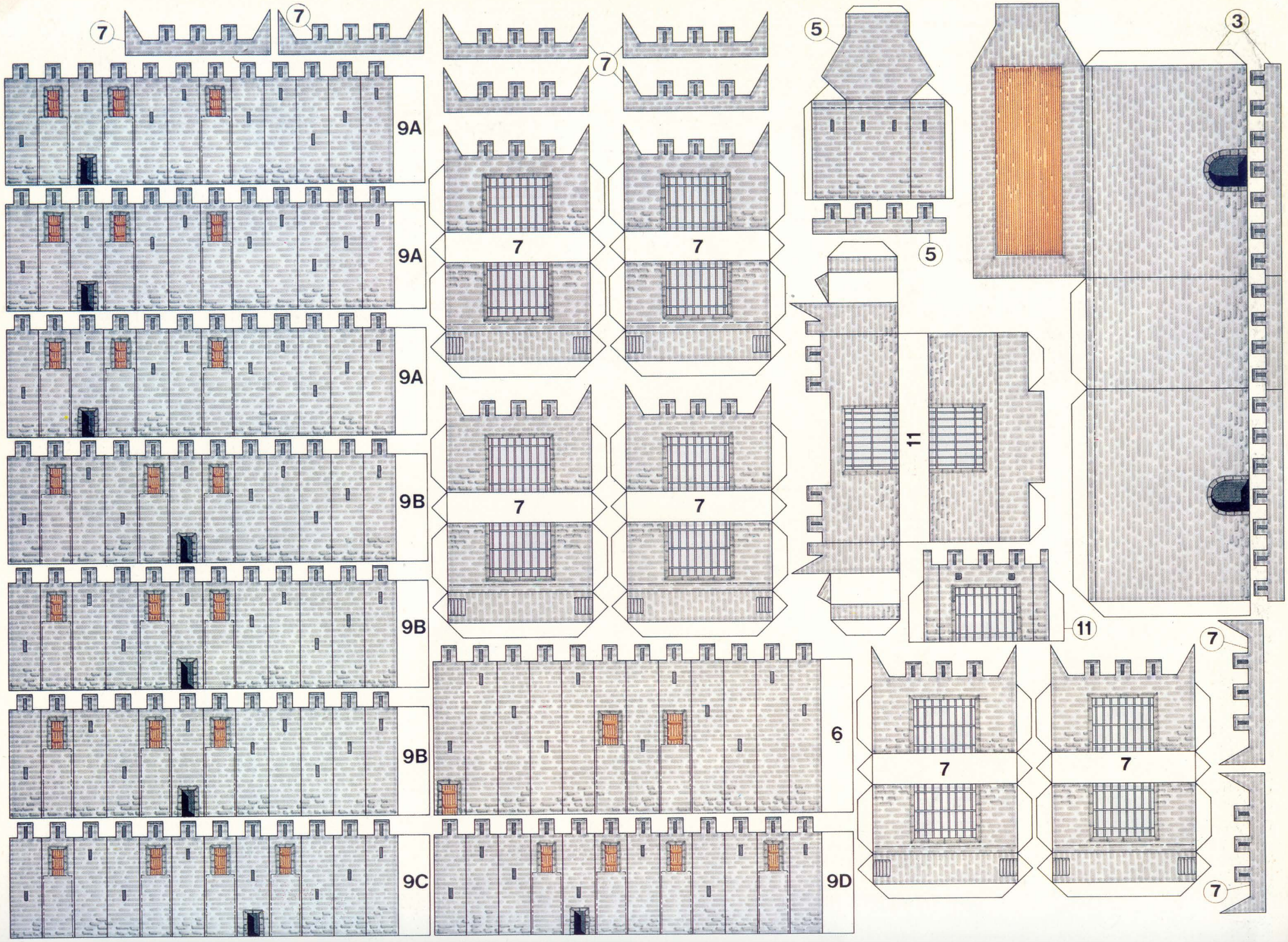
As suggested in the section on the stable area above, you can build new parts and

accessories for anything you consider appropriate. For instance, the roof of the central tower could use a three-dimensional storage shed instead of the two-dimensional image shown on that surface. You could build sloping staircases from the walls to the tops of each of the outer towers. You may find good uses for small parts and bits of scenery from model railroad accessories.

It is possible, but not recommended, to go so far as to cut out the arrow slits on the crenellations along the walls. Even if you can do this with precision, the hole that's left behind will make a flimsy part even flimsier. With any extra cutting or detail work you attempt, be sure you aren't losing more than you're gaining because you've created a structural weakness in the process.

When you've got Great Stoney looking the way you want it, spray the entire construction with a dull coat finish to give the castle an appropriate flat luster, add some strength, and cover up any glue spots that may have found their way onto the exterior surfaces. When you're done, Great Stoney will be useful as a gaming accessory (if anyone in your campaign is lucky enough to encounter—or own—such a grand place) or as a display piece, either as the focal point of a diorama or sitting on a shelf all by itself.

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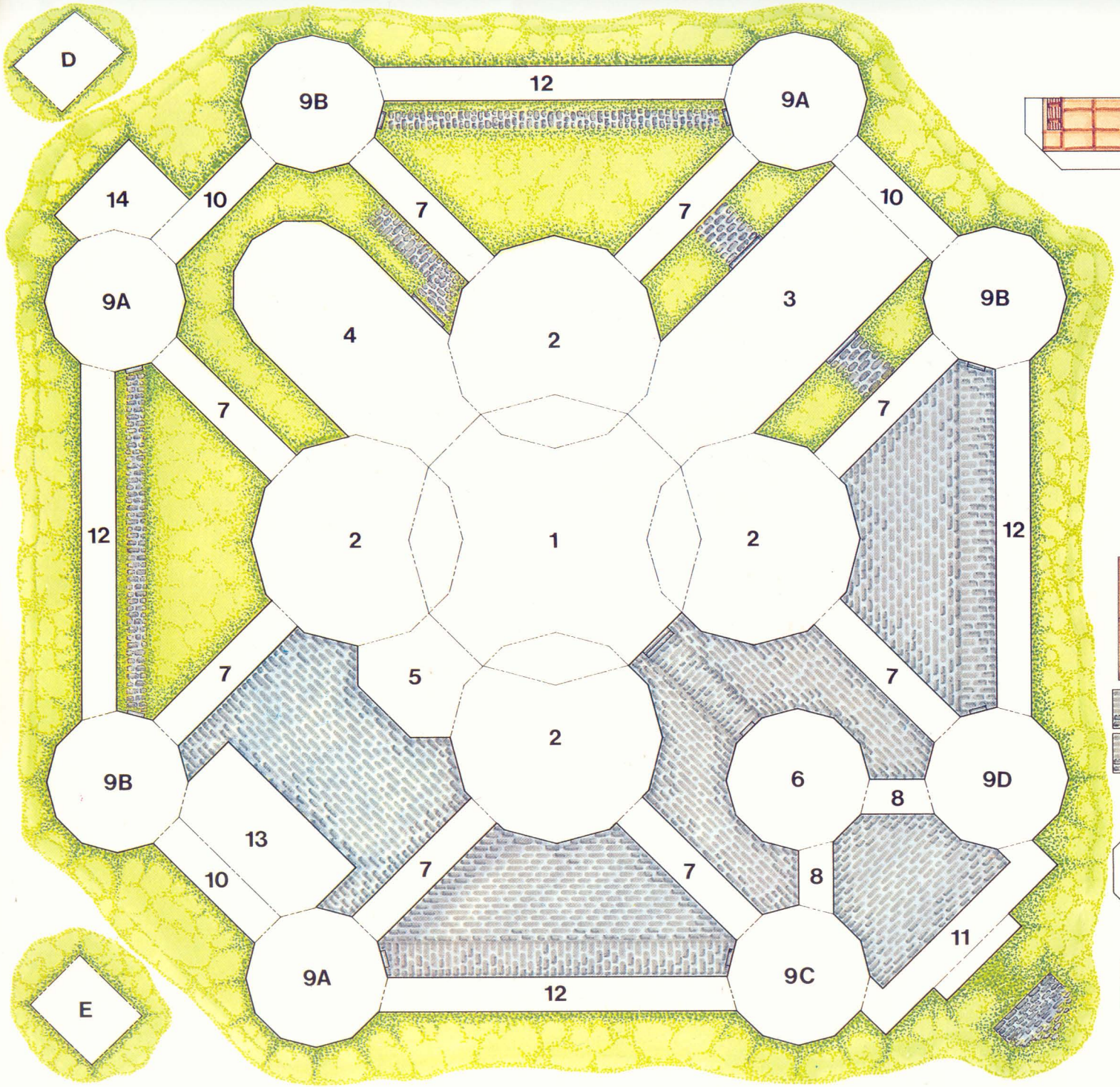
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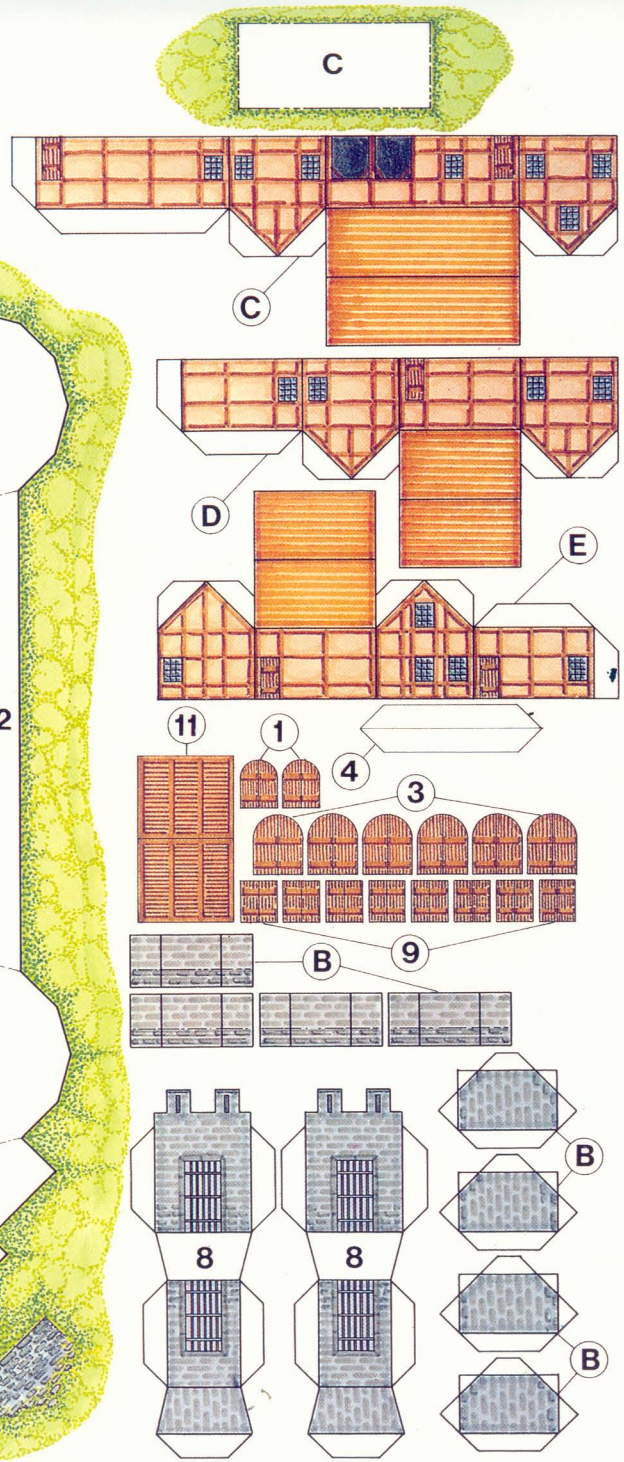
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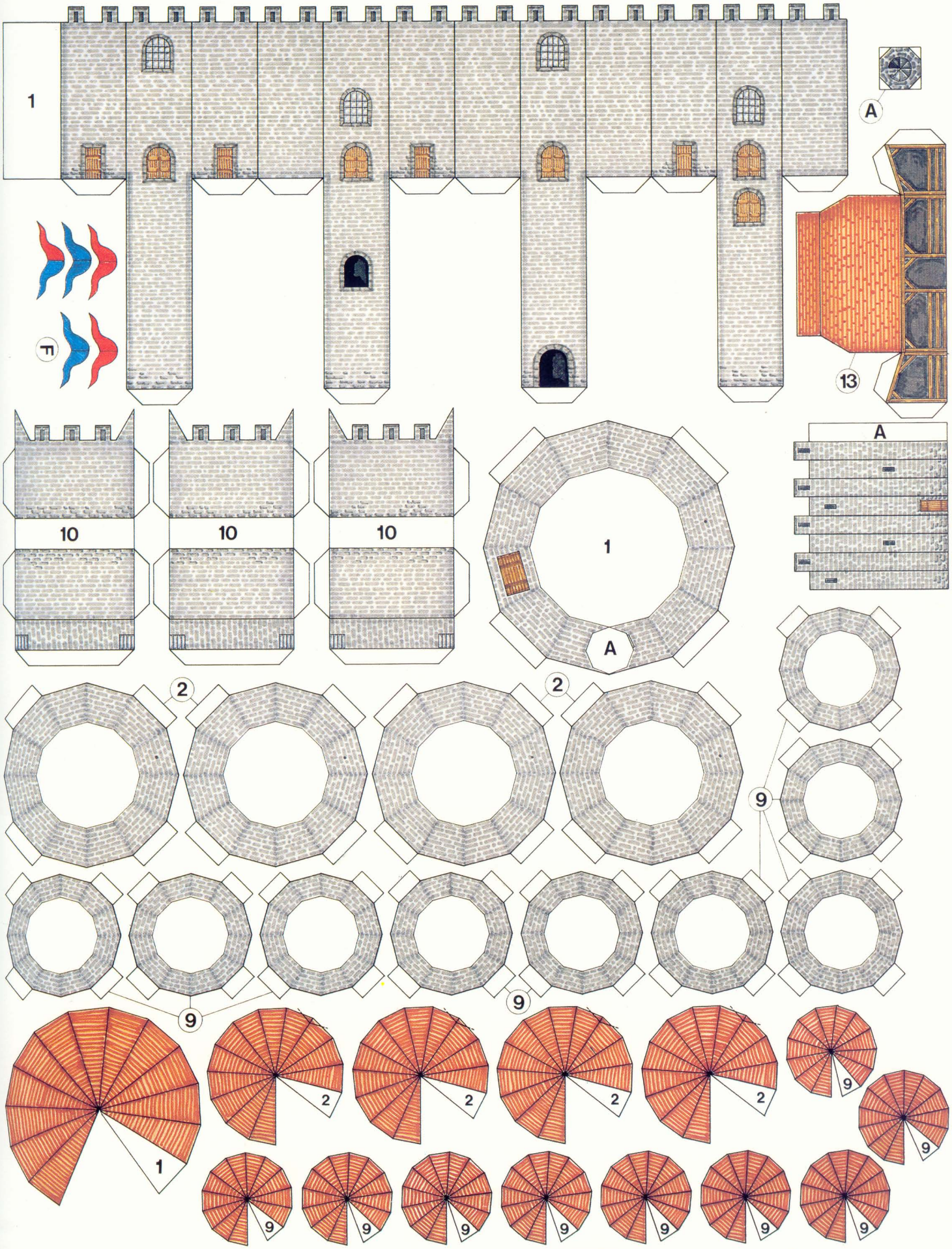
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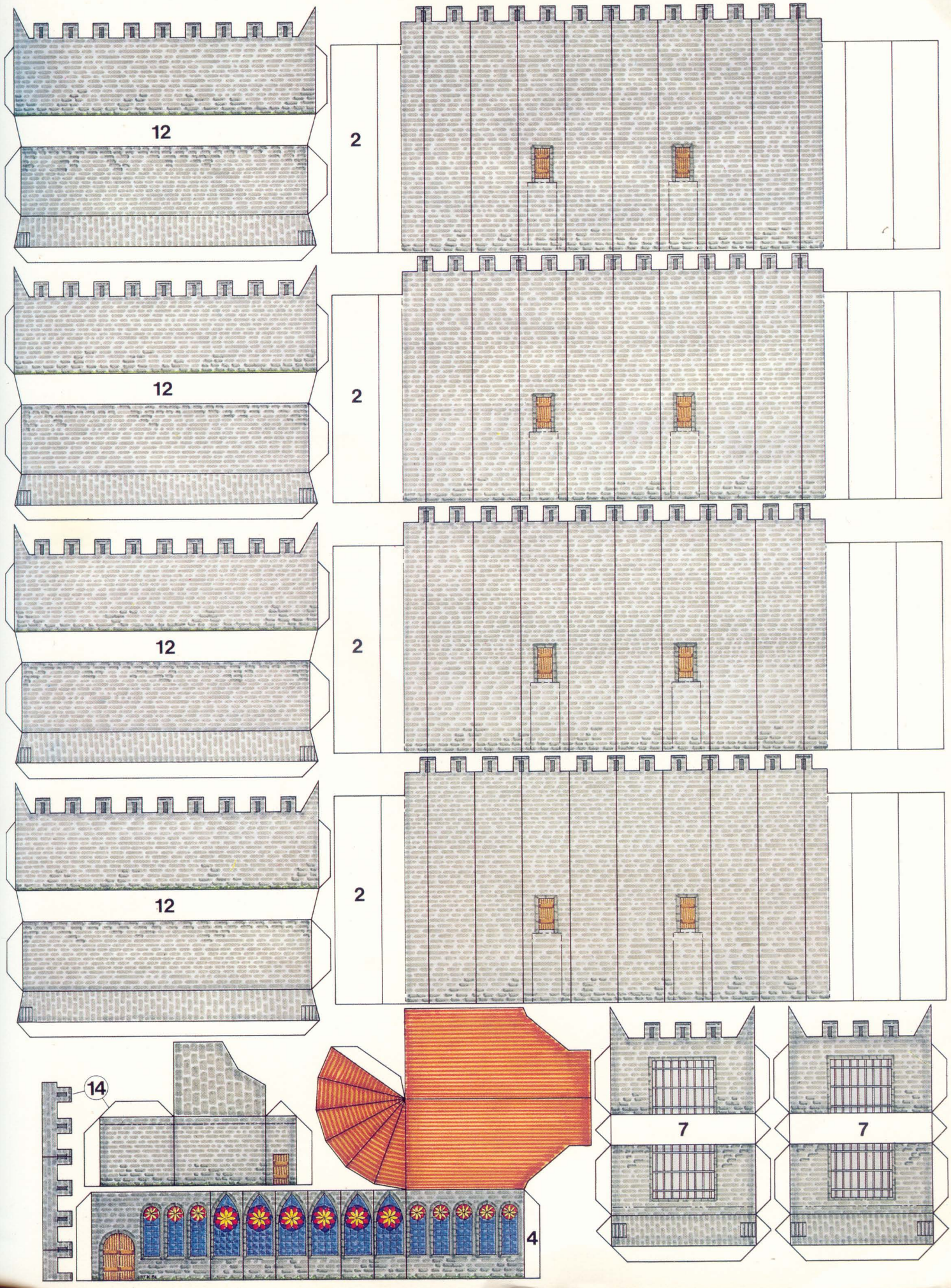
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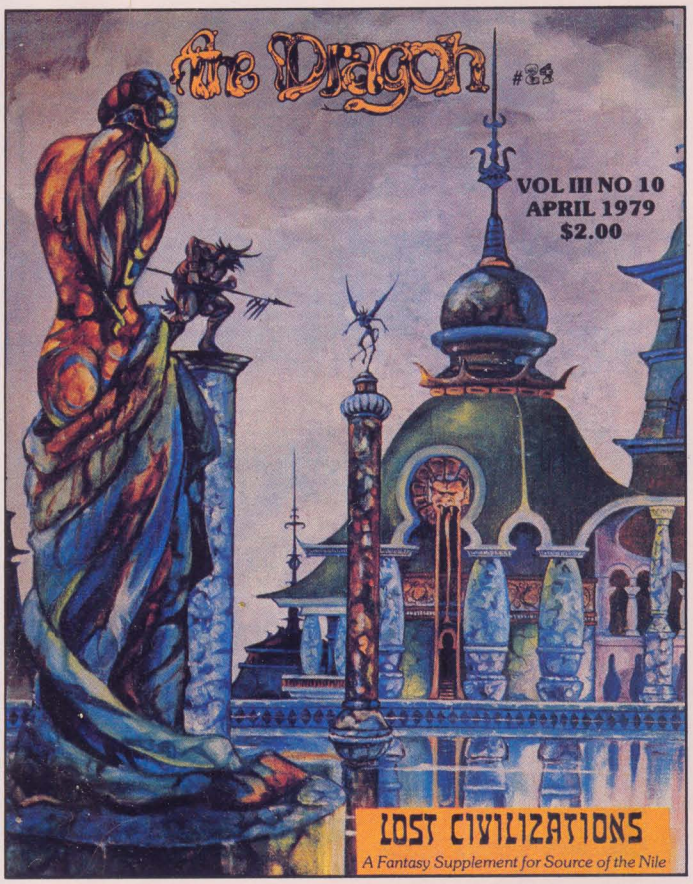
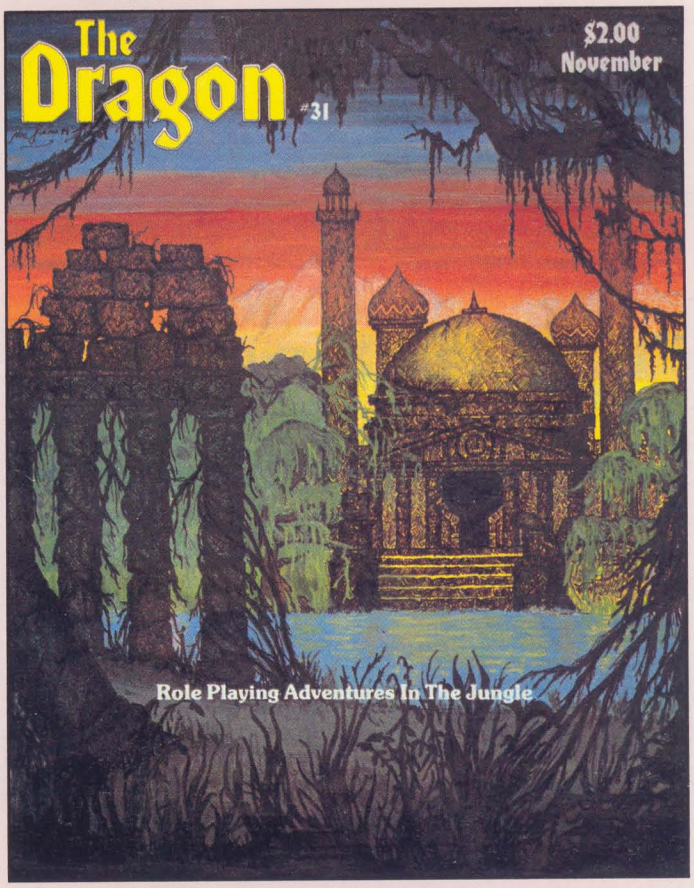
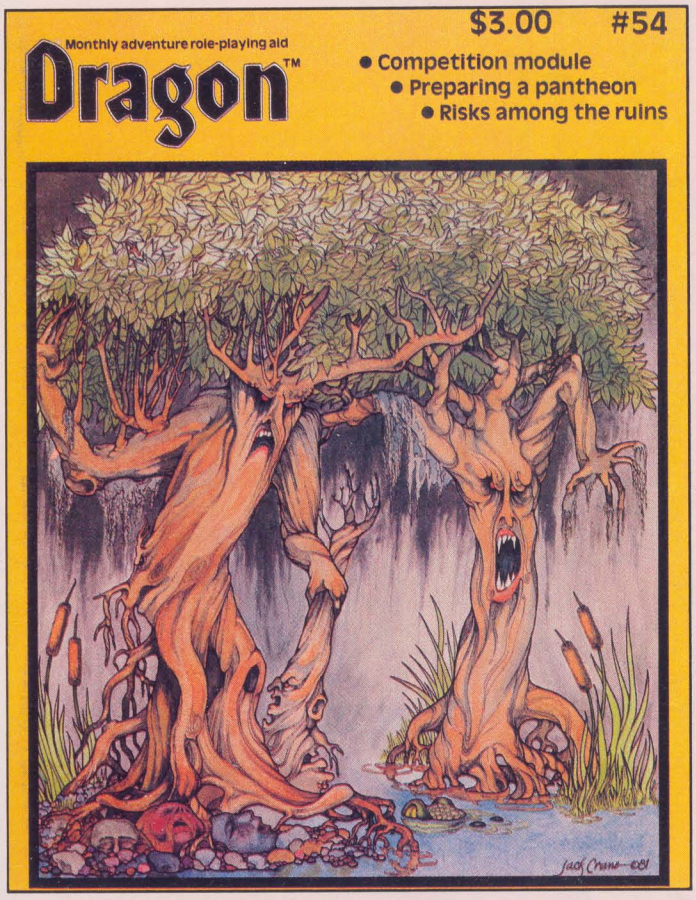


Elrohir

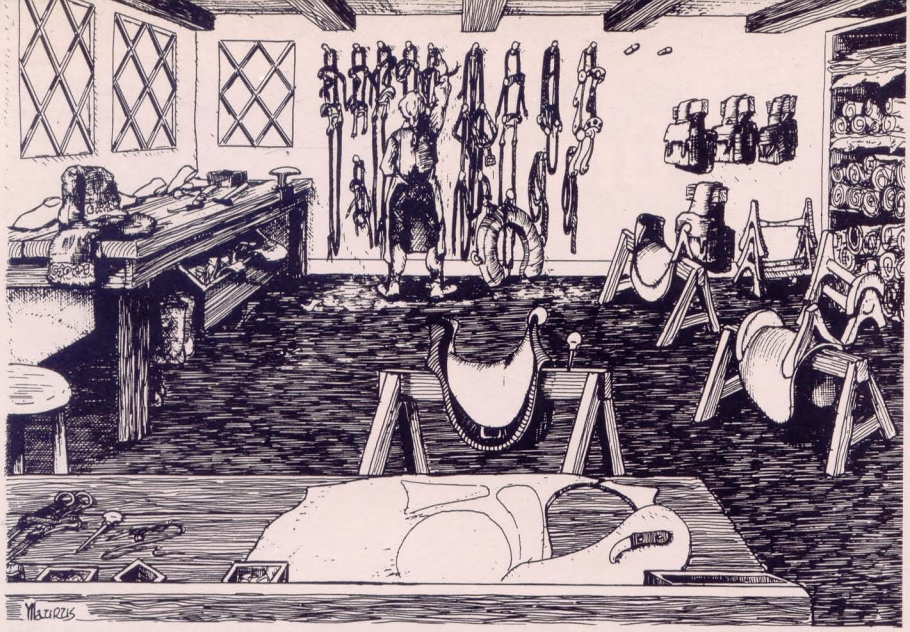


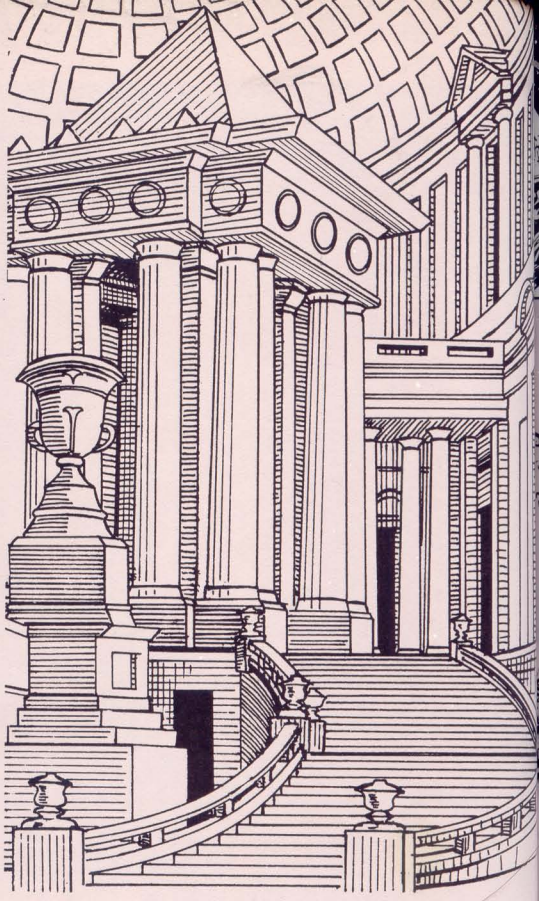
Alan Burton

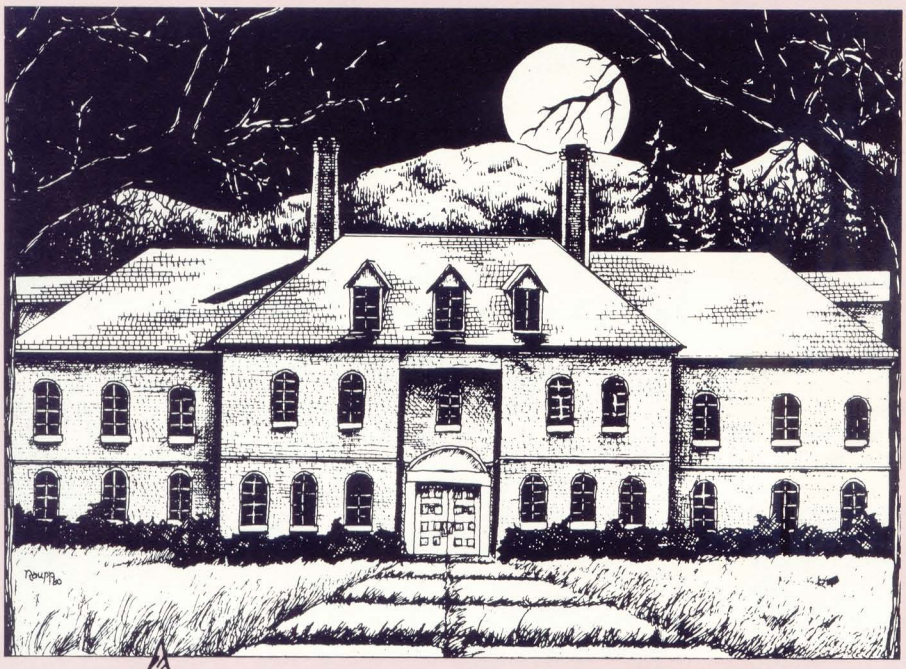


Jack Crane

Clyde Duensing III







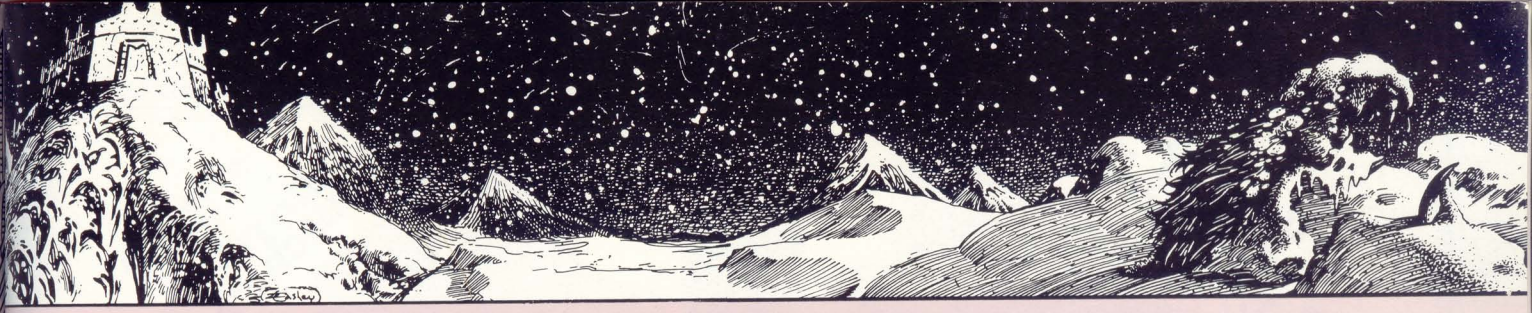
Upper left—Even a simple, homely leather shop can be the setting for part of an adventure; by Bob Maurus

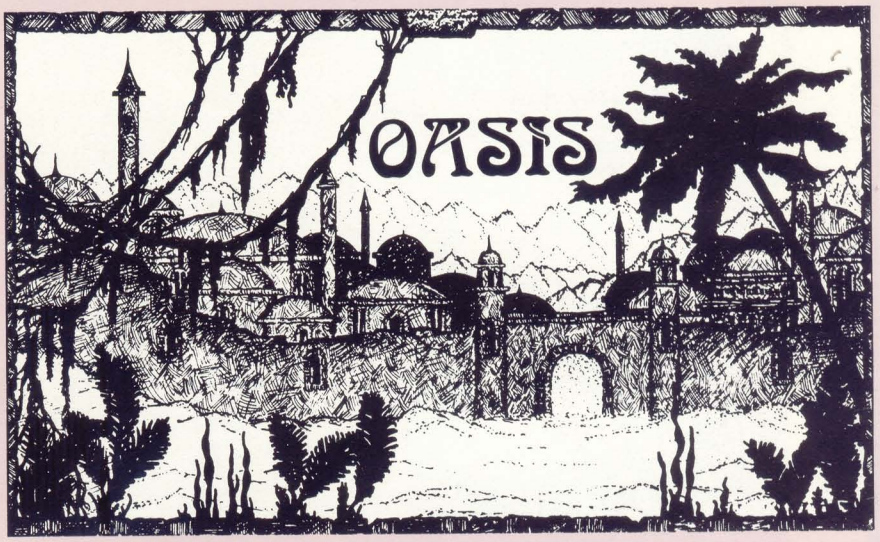
Above—The Great Temple of the sun god, Oenglamh, in the "Minarian Legends," by Kenneth Rahman

Left—The mansion of mad Professor Ludlow, art for a game module, by Roger Raupp

Below—"From the City of Brass . . . to Dead Orc Pass" in one quick movement of the artist's pen; by Darlene

From the city of Brass . . .



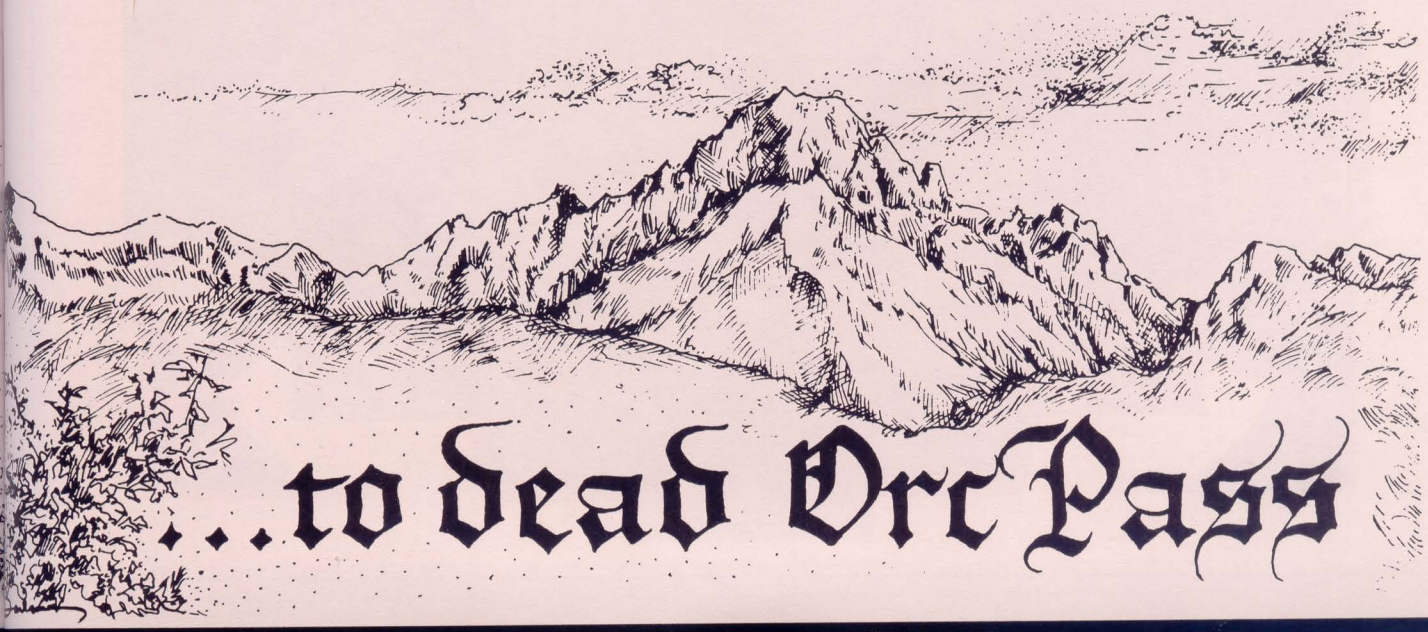


Top—The eerie setting of one of the Nine Hells, by Jeff Easley

Above—Jungle lore can give the most straightforward adventure a new twist; by Erol Otus

Upper Right—Oasis—the very word conjures up a different world to be investigated; by Alan Burton

Right—Derwen the female bard made another appearance in Josepha Sherman's story, "Eira," this time illustrated by Atanielle Annyn Noël



Castles by Carroll

I: Neuschwanstein

Deep within the Bavarian Alps, crowning a rugged mountain peak, stands one of the greatest fantasies of all time: an ivory castle called Neuschwanstein. It is the supreme fairy-tale castle, built on the site of an ancient medieval ruin once used by the knights of Schwangau.

The castle was built by mysterious King Ludwig of Bavaria — also known as "Mad Ludwig" — from 1869 to 1886. Its decorations immortalized some of the king's favorite legends and fairy tales. The palace is a kind of shrine to Lohengrin, the legendary "Swan Knight." Ludwig sometimes dressed as Lohengrin and took midnight rides on horseback.

The white swan has become the symbol of Neuschwanstein (which means *new swan stone*), and its image is found in many forms inside the castle. In the upper rooms, Ludwig built a grotto with an artificial moon and live swans which he fed by hand.

Ludwig built many castles across Bavaria, and frequently fled to them to escape the drudgery of being a ruler. On June 12, 1886, King Ludwig was deposed and taken to Schlossberg — and then found dead in nearby Lake Starnberg the next day. His mysterious death continues to intrigue the world, as does his legacy, the great Neuschwanstein.

Painting and text by Mike Carroll

Castles by Carroll

II: Wawel Castle

From the Dark Ages comes a Polish legend about a dragon that ravaged the countryside around the hill of Wawel. A clever shoemaker's apprentice named Krak threw a sheep soaked in burning pitch into the monster's lair; the dragon ate it and died. Krak went on to found the city of Krakow and was its first prince.

The castle of Wawel was built in the 11th century. It crowns Wawel hill, 100 feet above the surrounding city of Krakow. The city became the capital of Poland in 1320. For centuries Polish kings were crowned and resided in Wawel Castle.

Wawel Castle's large central courtyard was built for royal ceremonies and ancient tournaments such as jousting matches. The architectural design of the structure has Italian roots. In fact, in the early 14th century Polish king Kazimierz encouraged foreign trade and the influx of ideas from other countries. Influences from German, Bohemian, French, Armenian, and Italian artisans contributed to making Krakow a true Renaissance city.

Many treasures lie within the walls of Wawel Castle. An armory and treasury still hold medieval jewels, crowns, swords, and armor. Tapestries and priceless works of art grace the walls of many rooms. In the Chamber of Deputies, 194 carved wooden heads gaze down from the ceiling, as if keeping watch over those who are gazing upon them. Their visages evoke memories of the time of the dragons, and the heroes who fought them.

Painting and text by Mike Carroll

Castles by Carroll

III: Jericho

The word "castle" conjures up thoughts of fortresses with watchtowers atop stone walls, and massive gates behind which guards await an assault from the enemy. Castles are usually thought of as being from the medieval period, but walled cities and elaborate fortresses are a concept much older than that time. Many "castles" existed thousands of years ago, complete with their own histories of espionage, exciting battles, kings and queens, and brave warriors. One such place is the ancient fortress city of Jericho.

Until the advent of modern archaeology, most of our knowledge of Jericho was gleaned from the Book of Joshua in the Old Testament of The Bible. As scientists studied these ruins of antiquity, they found The Bible to be a very accurate historical resource on the subject. People and events which had been previously assumed to be mythical were discovered to have actually existed.

Jericho was an average-sized city strategically located in an oasis seven miles north of the Dead Sea. It was constructed in a way that made direct assaults on it almost impossible. An 11-foot-high stone foundation ringed a 30°, smooth slope which rose 35 feet to a main wall — possibly a double wall — that surrounded the city. This slick dome-like surface, called a glacis, prevented battering, made scaling very difficult, and provided no solid foundation for an enemy's ladders. Also because of the slope, would-be invaders could not build fires to fracture the stone. Several citadels peered out over the walls; houses were built on the thick outer barrier, in plain sight but unreachable from the outside. The city was indeed formidable.

According to Biblical accounts, Joshua was told to lead the people of Israel against this immense fortress. His army was ill-equipped for the task, and Jericho was apparently impenetrable. But Joshua's people had faith, and when they marched around the city with the Ark of the Covenant thirteen times over the prescribed seven days, the walls of this great castle crumbled. Evidence indicates that the outside wall fell outward, pulling the inner walls down with it. Jericho lies in ruins today, a mute monument to ancient civilization and to the faith of men.

Castles by Carroll

IV: The Tower of London

In the long and colorful history of England, one castle boasts the longest and most colorful roster of ghosts, prisoners, murders, spies, and treasures connected with its existence. This fortress, on the north bank of the Thames, is the Tower of London.

The Tower of London is a combination prison, fortress, and palace. The White Tower, the oldest section of the compound, was built by William the Conqueror in 1078. It houses a dungeon complete with torture chambers. Also known as "Bloody Tower," this edifice was the location of the supposed murders of the "little princes" (Edward V and the Duke of York) by their uncle, Richard III. According to legend, the dark halls are still haunted by the ghosts of the boys.

Six ravens are said to roam the tower grounds today, just as they have for centuries. Tradition says that if the birds ever leave, both the tower and the British Empire will crumble. Also found here, and of more obvious value, are the British Crown Jewels, including the 530-carat *Star of Africa*.

Celebrities like Anne Boleyn, Lady Jane Grey, Sir Thomas More, and Sir Walter Raleigh have been imprisoned or executed (or both) within the tower walls. Tower Hill, located nearby, was the site of many hangings and beheadings. But the Tower was also a place of royal apartments, pageants, games, and luxury. While imprisoned there, Sir Richard Lovelace penned the famous words, "Stone walls do not a prison make, nor iron bars a cage."

Castles by Carroll

V: Leeds Castle

Majestically poised upon a pair of islands in the middle of a placid lake stands Leeds Castle, nestled among rolling hills of daffodils in Kent, England. It is a stone fortress straight out of medieval lore.

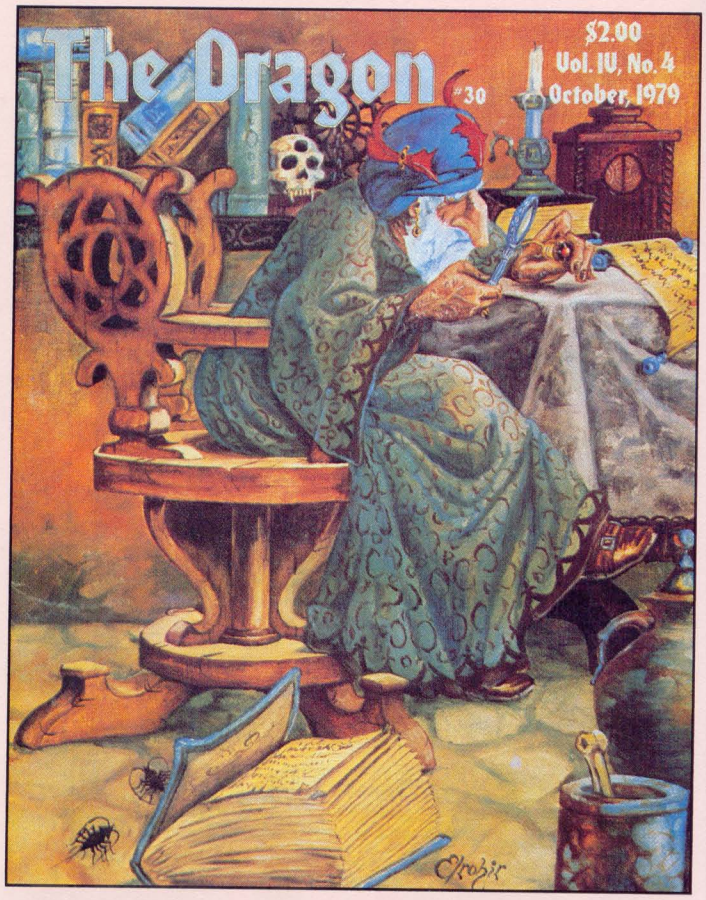
The castle of Leeds is mentioned in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales*, and was in fact a stop along the pilgrimage route to Canterbury. The place has a long association with English queens, including the wives of Edward I and Edward II as well as Anne Boleyn. Like most castles, its role in history alternated between fortress and palace.

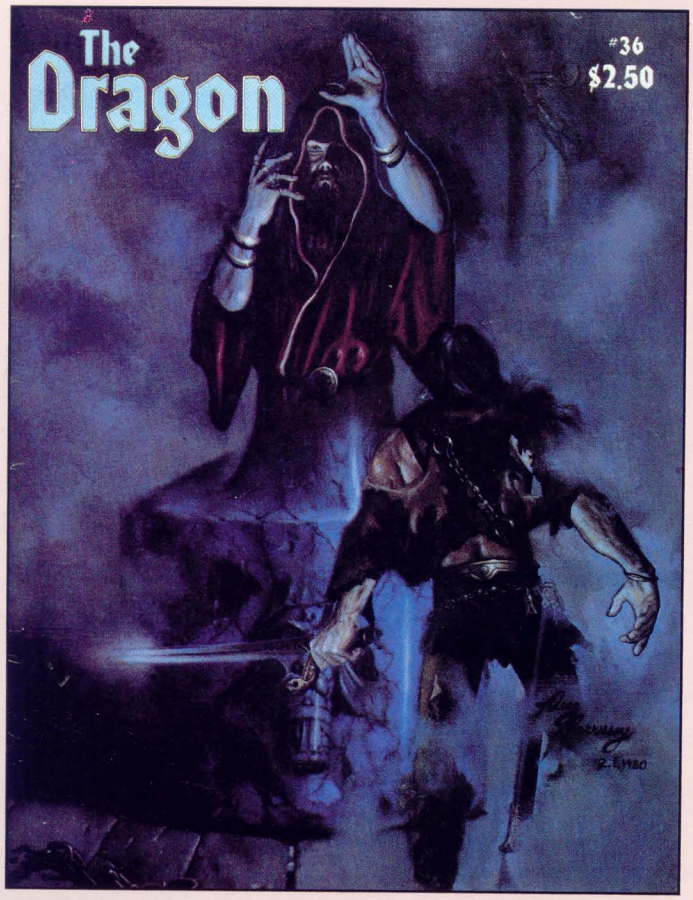
In the 14th century, Edward II gave the use of the castle to Sir Bartholomew de Badlesmere. Edward's infamous queen-consort, Isabella, tried to enter the castle disguised as a pilgrim — and was thrown out. This led to a siege of the castle by the king himself. When the garrison surrendered, the "rebels" were hanged in the gatehouse. Lady Badlesmere and her children were sent to the tower, and Isabella regained the castle until her death. Such were the ways of medieval diplomacy!

Leeds Castle was "born" as a wooden fortress in A.D. 857. A stone keep and gatehouse were built in 1130 by Hammond de Crevecoeur, a companion of William the Conqueror. The palace is in use even today; its security and impregnability make it an ideal place for meetings between world leaders.

Magic

#61, Susan Shay Collins





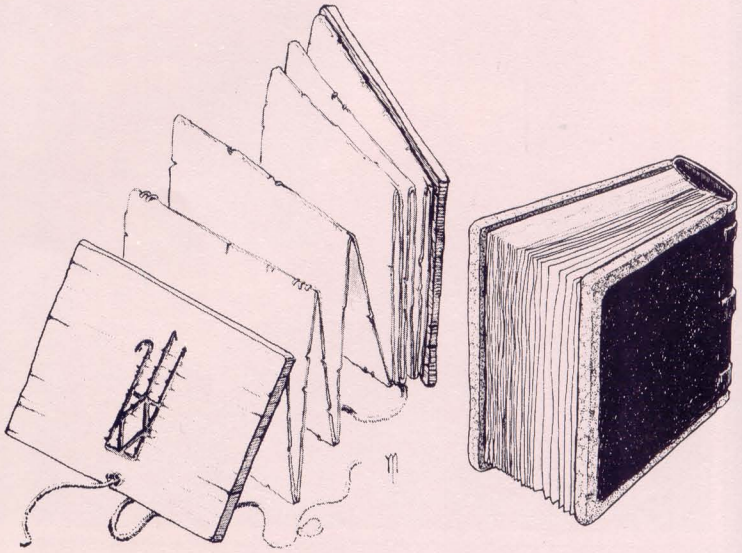
Many aspects of the wizard, or magic-user:

Top left—The witch, as a non-player character, by Alan Burton

Above—Researching magic, by Elrohir

Left—The wizard against the fighter, by Dean Morrissey

Below—"Pages from the Mages" come in many forms; by Bob Maurus

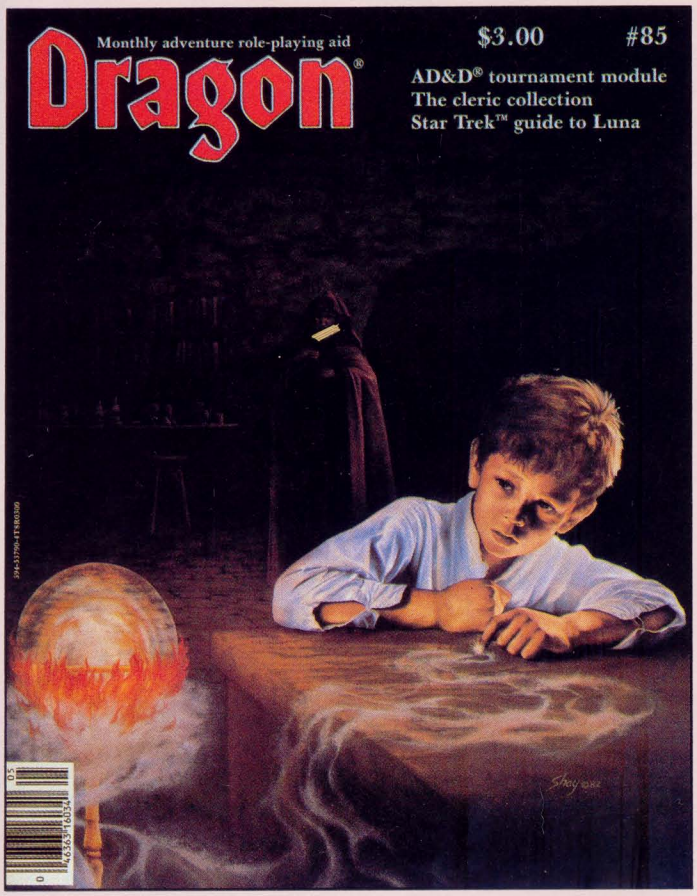


Spinning Tales, #104, Denis Beauvais

Dragon Spell, #53, Clyde Caldwell

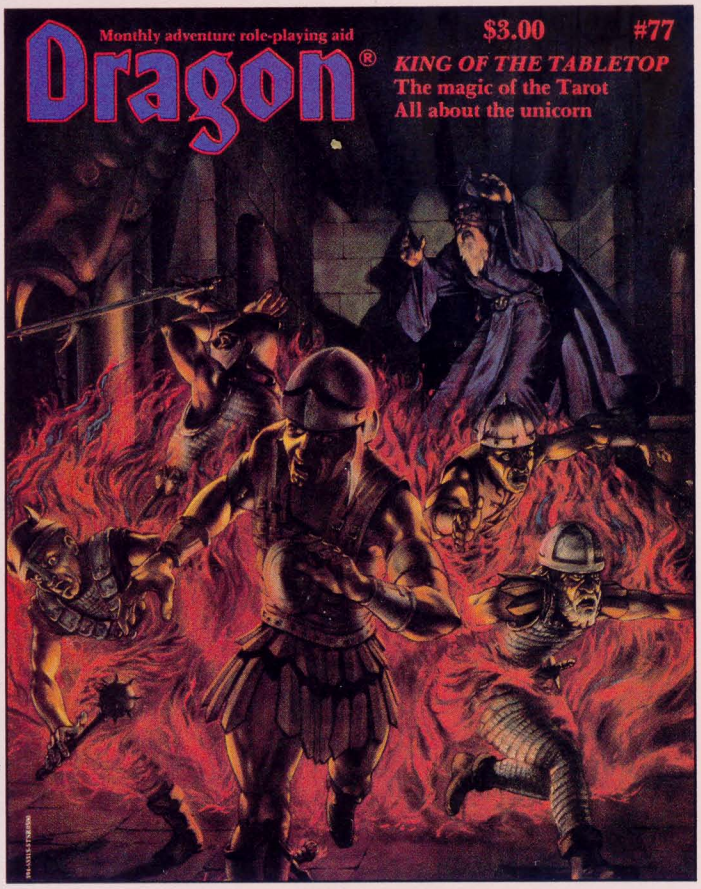
Crystal Visions, #80, Clyde Caldwell

Bats!!, #105, Robin Wood

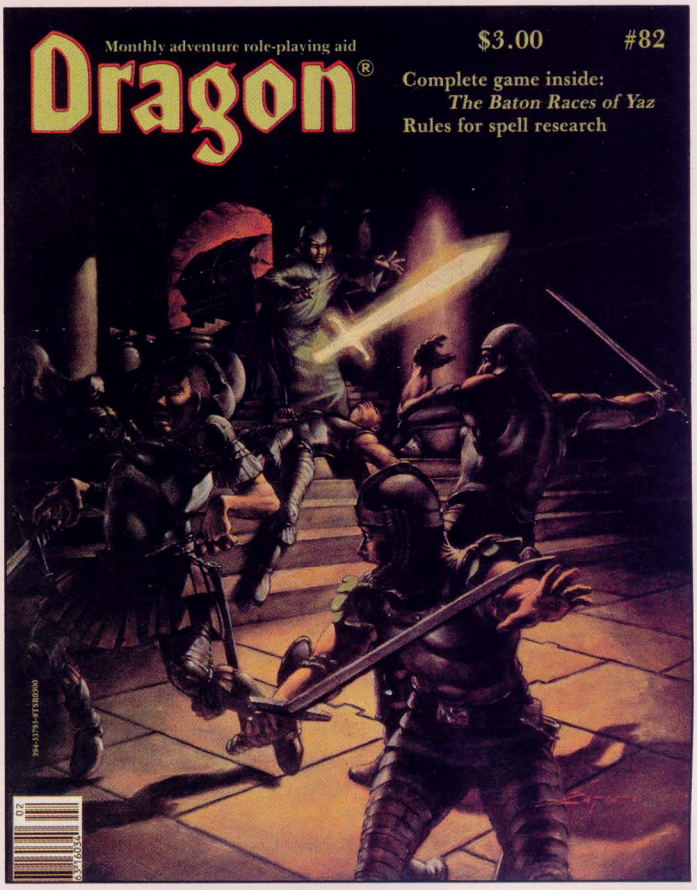


Susan Shay Collins

Oracles, by Susan Shay Collins



Wall of Fire Spell, Jerry Eaton



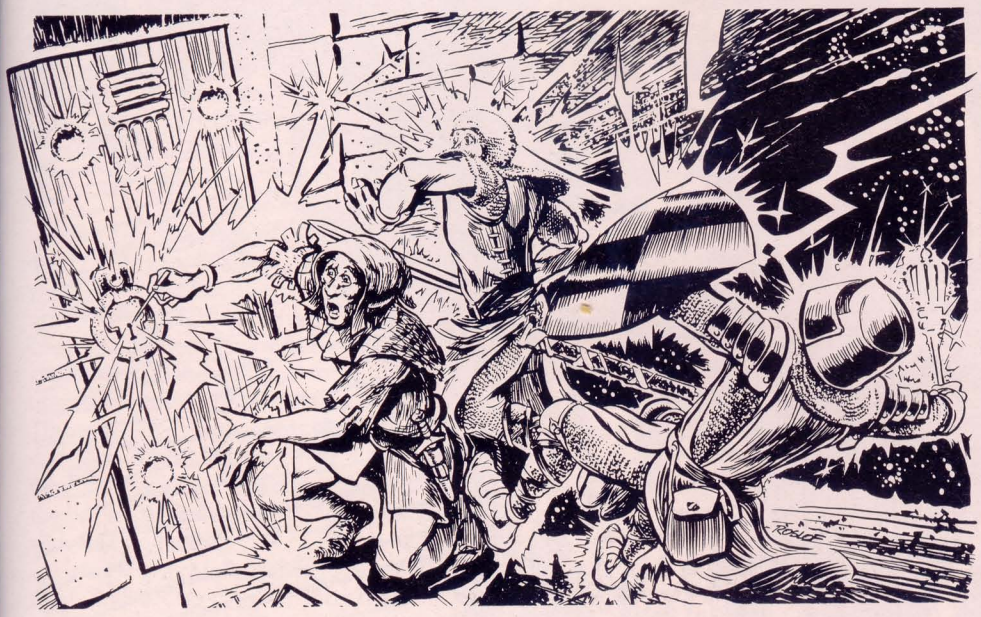
Mordenkainen's Sword Spell, Jerry Eaton

Gargoth Disguised, #107, Dean Morrissey

Right—Elminster, the wizard whose tales Ed Greenwood has gathered for the FORGOTTEN REALMS™ game setting; by Valerie A. Valusek.

Below—Dweomered doors can cause adventurers no end of trouble; by Jim Roslof.

Bottom—A column logo, by Darlene



Story illustrations by Bob Eggleton

The Wizard's Boy

by Nancy Varian Berberick

The Venerable Alan is dead. In the Halls of the King they have summoned the bards to sing the lay of life, to tell the tales of his many long years. What tales they will tell, I can guess. There is one, however, which they will tell, and tell with only part of the truth. And that is the founding tale. We have become a revered Order, now. We have become wise men, counselors, respected lords. There was a time when the title "wizard" was not applied to our kind. There was a time when we were labeled conjurers, fortune-tellers, sorcerers, and worse. We were held in little respect, and much fear. It was not then as it is now. I have seen the lifetime of two kings. We are a long-lived Order. The Venerable Alan had seen the reign of two more kings than I. They love him now, and they mourn him.

Come to me, and sit close. Draw up your stools and benches. Heat your ale, and find a place of comfort. The tale I would tell you is one that I know you have not heard. The tale I would tell you is one the bards chose long ago to embroider and make more suitable to these times.

Are you comfortable? Is your ale warm? Listen, then, and I will tell you the tale of The Venerable Alan and The Wizard's Boy.

I did not become a wizard in the usual way. There was, in the time of my own youth, no Seeking, no itinerant wizard sweeping through the villages and castles in great pomp and mystery to choose among the young children for those who might be considered for wizard's teaching. Things, in my youth, were very much different. There was no Order. There were, at that time, but few wizards, and they were named sorcerers, and spoken of with fear and scorn.

First I was a thief. I was the son of a thief, and had to my credit the teachings of a father who ended his own long career upon the gibbet. I was privileged to attend that death. It was not I who considered it a privilege, but the folk of the town who finally caught and hanged him. It was in their minds, I think, to draw for me a lesson in the ending of a thief's life. It was a harsh lesson, and one which stayed with me ever.

That is not to say that I never stole again. Indeed, upon leaving behind that wretched town I had nothing but the clothes upon my back, the fraying boots upon my feet, and the admonitions of the townsfolk to go and steal no more.

But I tried. I journeyed ever with the sight of my father, hanging lifeless and ruined upon the gibbet. I knew that I wanted to face no such fate. I wanted no crossroads grave for myself. I knew, as well, that I was poorly equipped for any other career than thievery. We are fatalists as children. We understand the reality of life in a world where power is held by those older and larger than we. I do not wonder that I viewed my prospects with a large degree of cynicism.

Still, the degree and reason for my thievery changed. I stole now only what I must.

I stole when I could find no work, when I could not beg for my needs. There is no place for a homeless boy of ten years in a world which views strangers with suspicion and mislike. I made attempts at respectability. I would stop in every good-sized town or village, petition innkeepers, stablemen, shopkeepers, for the work which would keep me clothed and housed and fed. I was not often successful, but I was persistent. It was not until I was certain that there would be no work for me that I stole what I needed. It was in such a village that I met Alan.

My boots, which had been frayed and wearing thin at the time of my father's death, had worn through and finally become useless. A morning and an afternoon of seeking employment had served to show me that there was no one in the village who would risk the presence of an unknown boy in his shop or inn. I had begged a few scraps of food and a sip of ale from the baker's wife at the nooning, but it was nearing night now, and my belly was making known to me its need for more. And my feet were sore and gritty and the dust and pebbles which had worked their way through the holes in the soles of my boots. As the sun bled in setting across the western sky, I sneaked, carefully, I thought, into the back of a tanner's shop. There was a pair of soft leather boots there which would nicely fit me. The shop was closed for the evening meal, and I did not think that the tanner would soon return.

I was wrong. I had the boots in my hand, not stopping to put them on, and was making my way back out through the rear of the shop when I was caught.

The tanner, a big, burly man, grabbed for me, missed, and sent up a shout which fair roused the whole of the small village. I ran, pelting through the narrow streets, the tanner and several others who had answered his cry giving chase. I tore past the baker's shop, down an alley, and through the courtyard of the village inn.

Dashing here and there, I made my way toward the inn, thinking to hide myself among the crowd which was surely within. There, I ran up against someone and I was caught.

I thought of nothing for a moment, for I was panicked. I heard my heart pounding in my ears, and surely I wheezed like a bellows for all to hear, for it had been a long run. Big hands grasped my arms. I staggered, for my knees were weak with the effort of the run and with fear. There would be a beating next, and I hoped nothing more.

He shook me, not hard, and not unkindly, but more to get my attention. He had it.

I looked up. Behind me the angry sounds of my pursuit faded. I knew that the tanner and his friends were there, clamoring for me to be turned over to them. I had no thought for them. There was no room for thought of anything but the man who held me.

He was tall, and not so young, but not so old. His robes were an indistinct brown color. Over these he wore a hooded cloak of fine burgundy wool. The hood was thrown back, revealing hair of darkest black, touched in places with gray and long enough to nearly touch his shoulders. His beard was thick and glossy, with more gray in it than his hair. His face, weather-worn and craggy, spoke of travel. All this I saw, while trapped by the grip of his eyes. They kept me with a hold far surer than the grip his hands still had upon my arms. They were black, if they could be given any color, and they were as deep as cavern pools, running still and quiet. I looked into them, and I was lost to all around me.

I felt every secret being plumbed from me. I was convinced that this man was able to see into my most inner places and that nothing could be hidden from that dark regard. For myself I learned nothing. That gaze which took and inspected every part of me gave nothing back. I might well have sought to use the night sky for a window. And then he spoke.

"Who are you, boy?"

There was gentleness in his voice. His eyes, then, revealed something a little like wonder and more like recognition.

I could do nothing but answer. I told him my name, and he nodded as though I had confirmed information which had already come to him from some other source.

"He stole the boots!" And with the tanner's aggrieved and belligerent cry, I was suddenly back in the real world.

The stranger looked past me then, and regarded those in the courtyard who muttered with uneasy agreement. He reached down, taking the boots which were still clutched in my hand. "These?"

"Aye." The tanner's tone was changing. There was a subtle undertone of fear beneath his word of agreement.

He tossed them to the tanner, who was too startled to catch them and let them fall to the cobbles at his feet. "They are returned."

The tanner grumbled behind me and muttered of punishment. The hand still upon my shoulder turned me, and I faced my accusers. I thought then that he would turn me over to them, and I began to tremble, for I had no love of beatings. But he did not. He extended his arm so that I was enfolded in the burgundy cloak. I felt the cold nudge of the sword which was sheathed at his side. I knew then that there would be no beating.

The tanner looked about him for the support of his friends. There was none, for they were fading away, looking uncomfortable and making it clear that they would not press the matter. After all, the boots were returned, and they had business to which they should attend.

Alone, the tanner stood his ground a moment longer. His eyes went from the stranger to me, and widened suddenly with something like fear or perhaps understanding. He picked up his boots and hastily left.

"Why did you steal the boots?"

I looked up at him from the haven of his cloak and shrugged. "Mine are worn to useless, m'lord." I did not know that he could rightly claim the title, but I sensed that if he could not claim it by birth, I might so name him and not be far wrong.

He smiled. "So you steal?"

"It was the only way at the time."

"Ah. A pragmatist."

I did not know what that meant, but it did not sound insulting, so I only nodded. He laughed.

"Where do you live, boy?"

"Nowhere, m'lord."

"Your parents?"

"My father is dead this past year. My mother ten years ago."

"I see."

He seemed to consider something, and then nodded as though he had come to a decision. He regarded me closely again, and again I felt that I was swimming in waters too deep for my skill. I began to shake, and tried to stop. I had little success. When he saw this, his smile deepened.

"I need a servant. But not one who will steal from me."

I lifted my chin at that, and answered far more arrogantly than I would have had I known who he was. "I do not steal if my belly is full, m'lord."

"Or if there are boots upon your feet?" He was amused.

"Aye."

He loosed me then, and I stepped away, but not far. He reached into the pouch which hung at his belt and took out several coins. "Go buy the boots, boy."

I took the coins and stared. They were twice what the boots were worth, and far more riches than I had ever held. Even so, I do not believe that I would have taken them and run. "All of this, m'lord?"

"The tanner will feel well paid for his trouble tonight. Buy them and return to me here."

"Aye, m'lord."

I found the tanner in his shop, alone at his workbench. He was not working, but sitting silently. I paid him with all the coins I had been given, yet he tried to return them, saying that the boots were not for sale.

"But, sir," I said, puzzled by the refusal to sell his wares and by the long, suspicious looks he was giving me from the corners of his eyes. His looks made me shiver. "I offer you twice what the boots are worth."

"Aye, and what do you offer me but conjurer's gild?"

"Conjurer's gild? These?" I held out the coins. There was nothing wrong with them that I could see. They were the small square coin of the realm, marked on both sides with the sheaf of wheat which stamped them as good as king's coin.

"No, sir, these are good."

"You had them of the—" He stopped, shook his head once, and picked one of the coins from my hand, examining it closely. "You had them of the man in the stable yard?"

"Aye."

He peered more closely at the coin. "Well, it seems sound enough." Squaring his shoulders, he took the rest of the coins. "Very well, then, boy. Take the boots. And take something else."

"What then?" I asked, my hands already stroking the fine, soft leather of the boots which were now mine.

"Take heed, boy. You throw your lot in with a conjurer."

Again I shivered. "How do you know that? My lord seems a right enough man." Still, there was doubt in my mind, cast there by the certainty in his own expression.

"He is a conjurer. We know his kind here. We know his tricks and schemes." The tanner's smile was sour.

"You name him conjurer . . ." I whispered.

"Aye, and that he is. Have a care, boy, that you sell your soul for more than a pair of boots for your feet."

My soul! The boots grew heavy in my hand. Was that the price of footwear? I remembered his clear dark eyes, the firm, kindly way in which the stranger, now named conjurer, had stood for me against the tanner and his fellows. My soul? I did not think that he was bargaining for my soul. I did not think, then, that he was what the tanner named him. Shrugging and tucking the boots under my arm, I left the tanner to his profit.

Still, the tanner's words were much with me as we began our journeys. Alan did not try to hide his identity from me. Neither did he at once disclose it. It came soon enough. As he wished, I acted as his servant. He did not have a horse, so we traveled on foot. It was not long before I discovered that the tanner's warning held truth: I had fallen in with a conjurer.

There was a night, not long after our association began, when we were camping in the depth of the forest. I had trapped two rabbits for our dinner. The night was chill and wet. It had been raining since the dawn of that cold, gray day, and while Alan skinned my catch, I tried to light a

fire from the best of the wet wood that I had gathered.

I had no success with the kindling. The sparks from my flint would leap, arc, and fall to their deaths upon the wet twigs and leaves. After many attempts, my hands stiff and awkward with chill, I cursed roundly.

Alan laid the meat aside, glanced up at me, and smiled from the shadows of the hood which he had drawn over his head against the drizzle. "A strong oath for a lad so young," he said softly.

"Aye, but not strong enough to light a fire," I grumbled.

"It is a wet night. It might be that you ask too much of your flint and tinder, boy."

"I ask it to do only what it should."

"Aye, but not what it can."

I sat back on my heels and tossed the flint aside with an expression of disgust. My anger was, I thought, a good covering for the disappointment which I felt at the prospect of a cold camp and no dinner.

Again Alan smiled. "Let me see if I can help."

I wished him luck, hunkered upon the damp ground, and watched with little hope for a fire this night.

He moved closer to the ring of stones I had fashioned to contain the fire. He arranged the kindling only a little, then took a small breath.

"A fire," he said softly, and I knew that he was not speaking to me. Neither, I thought, was he speaking to himself, as a man does when reviewing the tasks at hand. "A fire. To warm our meal, to warm our night. A fire for kindly purposes only."

It was as though he asked a boon of someone. I shivered, and the shivering had little to do with the cold or the damp. The warning words of the tanner came into my mind, and I hugged myself against the chill and the advance of fear.

"A fire, bright and hot. A fire for comfort." He lifted his eyes, his gaze passing over me as though I were not there. It traveled high, and I could not but follow where it went, past the heights of the trees, up to the gray and starless sky. The forest became still around us. The drip and sigh of the drizzle seemed to fade to nothing. The soft rustle of forest creatures, hunting in the night, vanished.

His voice was a sigh. "A fire." My eyes came back to him, and I was not able to see his face now. Shadows had drifted across it, shadows which did not touch his shoulders or the rest of him. And through the shadows I could see the light of his eyes.

Words fell from his lips, now, and they were words which I had never heard before, but which were, in some frightening way, familiar to me.

"Fūrr haētu flamma cuman hēr for thes tīma ti wearm! Fūrr! Cuman hēr!"

The words spilled from him like silver water. It seemed to me, crouched before the lifeless fire ring, that I could see the words, feel them. I was too frightened now to even shiver. I would make no move at all which might call his attention to me.

"Fūrr haētu flamma cuman . . ." His voice rose, loud and strong, and then fell fully away. There was no echo of his words among the forest trees. He lifted his hands then, and placed them above my little pile of kindling. He left them there, only a scant inch above the wet wood, for a long moment.

Then he moved. Only his hands, but the motion caught my attention and held it. He lifted his hands slowly, as though pulling with them a great weight. His fingers curled, gripping, gripping something I could not see.

"Fūrr!" he said again, his voice a whisper now, and strained. *"Furr, cuman her!"*

And it came. It came first as soft, thin tendrils of smoke. But soon the tendrils thickened, became darker, and at their roots, far down among the larger pieces of wood which I had laid as a base for the fire, flame licked. He raised his hands higher, straining now, and the flame became two, and three, and leaped triumphantly into the night.

There was fire.

Slowly I got to my feet, keeping my eyes ever upon the enchanted flame. I thought of flight, I thought of bolting through the wet forest, running until I became lost, running until he could no longer find me or my soul.

But I did not run. I did not run because he fell back upon his heels, bringing his hands, the hands which had only seconds ago worked sorcery, up to cover his face.

"Sorcerer," I whispered. It was not an accusation, and I was sorry that it sounded like one once spoken.

He dropped his hands and lifted his eyes to mine. "Aye."

I shivered. Not from cold, but from fear. I was well traveled for my ten years. For that I may thank my former career. I had the common knowledge of conjurers, tricksters, dabblers in the unknown, therefore the forbidden. My mind told me that I was in danger. *The first thing a conjurer will take,* the common knowledge said, *is the soul. So fine is his skill that you will not realize your loss until it is too long gone.*

And yet I could see nothing evil, nothing fell, in the dark, tired eyes of the man who revealed himself as part of that suspect brotherhood. There was only Alan, tired, and yet very much the same man who had defended me from the grim harvest of my thievery.

I listened not to my mind but to my heart. In the light of his fire I could see that he was breathing differently, much like a man who has expended a great deal of effort.

"M'lord," I asked softly, going to his side. "Are you unwell?"

He raised his hand and waved my question gently away.

"M'lord, can I get you anything? Water—?"

"Hush, boy," he said at last. His voice was weary, but patient. He placed a hand upon my shoulder and got slowly to his feet. "Ah. That is better."

"Are you ill?"

This seemed to amuse him, for he smiled. "Not at all, boy. Only used."

"Used?"

"Aye. Used. Magic is not free for the taking, boy. One must give something in return." He raised his arm, stretching muscles which were cramped and stiff.

"What—what do you give, m'lord?"

He paused in his stretch, abandoned it, and came to stand beside me. His hand moved down, lifted my face up to his own. I felt again, that sense of falling into the depths of his gaze. I was, again, held by the dark eyes which had only moments ago glowed with sorcerous power.

"Do—do you seek my soul, m'lord?" I whispered.

He did not speak for a moment, but seemed to be considering my words. When he did speak, his voice was colored with amusement. "No, boy. Or, perhaps, yes."

I trembled now, and moved away from his hand. He shook his head, his eyes softening. "No, boy. I do not seek your soul to take and keep. It is only that if I seek it, I seek it to show to you."

"M'lord?"

"Enough of this now." He shrugged his shoulders as though throwing off a burden. He took up the skinned rabbits and the sticks I had found to spit them. "Are you not hungry? Our dinner has been delayed a little, but it is more than

enough time to make my belly impatient. Come, spit the rabbits, and we will eat."

I took the meat from him, and the spits. The tanner's words seemed of no more importance to me.

He was not flagrant with his skills, or prodigal of them. I well knew the effort it cost him to use his magic now. *Magic is not for free . . . one must give something in return.* I wondered, as I traveled with him, what it was that Alan gave. But I never asked. I had lost the first layers of my fear. I was no longer afraid of him. But I was not comfortable with the idea of magic. I had been too well versed in the common knowledge to lose that fear very soon.

He asked me once, if I would like to learn his skills.

"No, m'lord. These skills are beyond me." I smiled and shook my head. "I can steal a pair of boots—"

"Sometimes," he said with wry amusement.

"Aye. Most times. But I would not try to steal the fire."

"Is that what you think I do? Steal the fire?"

I shrugged.

"Well, well. It might be an answer. From whom do you think I steal it?"

"The gods?"

"The gods? Aye, maybe."

He smiled at that. "There are no gods, boy, but those of our own making."

I did not argue with him. I had little truck with gods in my short life. Were there gods, indeed? I did not know, and cared less. There was a body of gods commonly worshiped, but they had few of my petitions, and had answered even less.

"Whatever, m'lord. No, I have no wish to learn your skills."

"A pity."

"Could you teach me?" The contrary question came, almost unbidden, to my lips. I would not wish to learn, I assured myself, but I was only curious to know if the power could be learned.

But Alan shrugged. "It does not matter, does it? You would not learn."

"Well, aye." He could not have failed to hear the disappointment in my voice. It was obvious even to me.

His careful gaze held me for a long time. He is seeking something, I thought. What does he seek when he watches me like that?

Our travels took us from town to village to town, stopping at the inns and staying a few days. At night Alan would join the folk gathered at the landlord's hearth and exchange the news of the day. He was a great gossip and loved to hear the tales and legends of the area. He had not told me what task engaged him, and I could not see that any did, except the gathering of tales and the exchange of news.

Sometimes I asked him where we were going, and he always answered the same.

"We are looking for the dragon, boy."

I would laugh and tell him that everyone knew there were no such creatures as dragons. They inhabited the nursery tales which women told to keep young children behaved and certainly not the real world.

He would laugh, too, and say that perhaps I was right.

And so we visited the towns, and he would sit and gossip the nights away. He made no use of his magic, and he maintained, as best he could, the persona of a simple traveler. But at night, by the fading light of an inn's hearth or over the embers of a dying campfire, he would watch me. I would catch, at times, the light of hope in his eyes, and a careful speculation.

Winter had come. I had been with Alan for more than a year, and our journeying took us less and less to the villages and towns. In the autumn he had purchased two horses, and this surprised me, although I was not unhappy to finally ride. By the time the first snow had fallen, we were in the foothills of the northern mountains, and we had not entered a town for nearly a month. We had actually passed two by, and as I saw the last one disappear behind the rocky bend of a river, I asked him again where we were bound.

"Seeking the dragon, boy."

The same answer. I began to wonder if he was serious.

We traveled ever upward, farther and farther, until we lost the beeches and birch trees and were surrounded by the hoary eaves of evergreens. The thin skin of the earth gave way in many places now to rocky bone, thrusting upward in boulders through the soil. We traveled above the tree line, and there were places where all the majesty of mountain and forest were revealed to us.

After a time we came to places ravaged by fire. Trees were stripped and blackened. Few creatures ran to hide from us, and dinner was difficult to find. What I was able to catch was hoarded and made to last for many days.

Wrapped in my cloak one night, finishing our scant meal, I asked him what he thought must have caused the fire.

"Lightning, perhaps?" I asked, for it had been known to happen that a bolt would strike a tree and the fire would spread, unchecked, killing thousands of acres, hundreds of miles of trees.

Alan shook his head. "The dragon."

I looked at him long and saw that he was in earnest.

"There are no dragons," I said, more to quiet my awakening fear than to refute his statement. I did not laugh this time.

Neither did he. "There is one. And that one guards what I seek."

I looked around me at the blackened forest, thinking that in the nursery tales they told you that dragons breathed fire. I huddled deeper into my cloak. I was afraid.

He saw that and smiled. "You need not fear, boy, for we will part company before I meet the dragon."

That gave me even greater fear. "Never, m'lord."

"I am afraid so, boy. You can be of little use to me then, and perhaps a hindrance. I would ask you to wait for me, though, for it may be, I hope it will be, that I will return and we can continue together."

I was frightened, there was no covering it, and I made no attempt to hide it. I was coming to love him. It was, perhaps, that he was good to me, or because a boy at that age easily loves the one who acts as a father to him. Whatever it was, I was not going to leave him. I told him this, but he would have none of it.

"You can journey with me a little farther. Then we will part company. Wait, if you will, or leave. That is your choice, boy."

There was no appeal to that calm decision, and I did not speak further. But I resolved in my heart not to leave him.

He told me then the purpose of his visits to the towns. He did not love the local gossip for its own sake, he said, but it was the surest way to learn the tales and legends of an area. The farther north we had come, the more often did he hear the tales of the dragon.

It guarded something, he did not say what, but it was something he was willing to throw his life away for; therefore, I judged it to be of great value. A treasure, perhaps, or a talisman. I did not ask, for I reasoned that it must be a fearful treasure if it is worth his life to gain.

We traveled for two more days at the

timberline, he silent and I inwardly stiffening my resolve not to leave him no matter how he commanded me. And then we came to the peak.

It was a huge bare place, a giant rocky prominence pocked with the mouths of caves, covered with scree and boulders. Not a living thing grew upon its barren sides. It loomed above us like an angry skull. It made me afraid.

We were silent for a long time, he watching the peak, I watching him. I knew that he was going to dismiss me. I had my arguments, weak as even I thought they were, prepared.

He looked away from the peak. "It is time, boy."

"No, m'lord. I will not leave now."

"You do not have a choice."

"Will you tie me here, then, or take my horse?"

He smiled. "I do not think that will be necessary. You will do as you are bid, as you always have. It has been one of your chief virtues." Here he smiled again, for we both knew that my virtues were few.

"How can you ask this of me? We have traveled together for more than a year, m'lord. I thought I had earned your trust."

If I had thought that last would be a telling shot, I was mistaken. Alan merely nodded. "You have, over and over again, boy. And now I would entrust you with one more thing."

"To abandon you when you need me!"

"No. You are to wait here." He reached beneath his cloak and took out the dagger which was sheathed there. In the sunlight I could see a glimmer of light along the hilt of the sword he always wore.

He is mad, I thought then, and going against a dragon with only a sword. I said nothing, but took the dagger he held out to me. It was a beautiful thing, slim and sharp. The grip was chased silver and bore a single pale green jewel.

"Keep it in your boot, boy. You may need it."

"I want to help you!" It came out more as a wail than an insistence, and I was ashamed to hear the crack in my voice.

"You cannot help, and would only hinder."

"You are going after a dragon with a sword. Where will that get you?" I was angry and my voice mocked. "He will melt your sword, m'lord, and then where will you be?"

It surprises me now, looking back, that he was so patient with me. But he was, perhaps because he understood something of my feelings. He spoke softly, his voice even and reasonable. "I have more than my sword, boy. I have the magic."

"But I want to help."

That caused him to laugh. He did not laugh unkindly, but he was surely amused. I was wounded.

"I am pleased that even now I can provide amusement, m'lord."

"Do not be hurt, boy. But you cannot help. You cannot go against a dragon." He paused then, but went on. "And you have no magic."

I was chastened. He was right. I had no magic, and I was, after all, only a small boy, a hindrance. Should I not have turned away the opportunity to learn of his magic? In my mind I knew that I could not have learned enough to be able to help him now. I must take many years of study, I reasoned. Still, in my heart I felt the sharp pang of regret.

"What would you have me do?"

"Ah. Now that is better. Wait here. Wait as long as you can or dare. You will know if I am able to return. When you decide that I cannot, you must run for your life. Run as hard as you have ever run before, for if I fail, the dragon will be out and his fury will seek victims. Run back the way we came, boy, and make your way to the King."

I stared at him. "To the King, m'lord? It is a month's ride to the King. And once there, how will I gain entrance to see him?"

He nodded to the dagger he had given me. "That will be your pass to the King. He will know it well, for it was his until he gifted me with it."

"The King gave you this?" I could not reconcile my picture of Alan the conjurer with this Alan who was now telling me that the King himself had gifted him with a jeweled dagger.

"When you see him, tell him you have come from me. And tell him that I have failed."

"Failed in what, m'lord?"

"He will know. If he wishes you to know, he will tell you."

"But—"

"You butt more than a ram sensing a ewe in heat, boy!" Alan's dark eyes flared with a sudden anger. "It is enough that you do as you are bid. Will you?"

"Aye, m'lord. I will."

His expression grew kinder. He reached across the horses and dropped a hand upon my arm. "You have been a good servant. I hope that we will leave here together. But if we do not, I know that you will do as I bid."

I loved him then. Tears sprang to my eyes, and I dashed them angrily away with the back of my hand. "Aye, m'lord, I will." And truly I thought that I would.

He was satisfied. "Tell the King, then, that you have studied with me. He will find a place for you."

"Studied with you? I have not studied with you, m'lord."

"Think you not? Aye, well, the King may find differently." He left me then with no further word, and I watched him go. He took his horse as far up the scree as he could and then left it. I saw him drop his hand beneath his cloak to loose his sword. Poor sword, and what good would it be against dragons?

I had truly intended to obey his instruction, partly through fear and mostly through love. But I did not. When he was far from me, nearly halfway up the peak, I started to move forward. I thought I was only going for a better look, for I was loath to stay back when I could see.

I walked my horse up the scree, guiding him carefully at first, and then giving him his head, leaving him alone to pick his own way. We drew even with the place where Alan had left his own mount, and passed it. But soon the way was too hard, and I stopped. On foot I crept farther up the rocky slope. The scree had given way to hard rock, but the path, such as it was, led straight up now.

I was an active boy, and found little difficulty scrambling for a hand- and foothold where necessary. I still think that I had thought only to see. He was out of my sight now, too far up for me to catch even a glimpse of him.

I balanced where I was, hands clinging to a ledge above my head, feet braced against a jutting rock below. There I stood when the sound came.

It was a horrible noise, a trumpeting, a bugling, and a hissing all at once. The air was filled with sulfurous stink, my breath caught in my throat, gagging me with fear. I trembled in every limb and would have run back the way I came, heedless of caution, but for the sound of his cry.

It was not a cry of pain or fear, but the bellowed sound of Alan's magic words, commands in that almost-familiar language of power. The shrieking increased. The air about me throbbed with stench and power. I clutched my handhold and squeezed my eyes shut.

I heard his voice again, and this time it was a cry of pain. I did not think, for if I had, I surely would not have done what I did. I scrambled upward again, my mind a gray blank wall, not admitting fear or pain or hope. I simply responded to Alan's cry.

The way twisted. There was no longer a path. I scrambled and climbed, clinging to rocks I never would have chosen for holds if I had been able to think.

And then I saw the dragon.

It was horrible. It was huge, and it stank like sulfur and cesspits. In the fading afternoon light, the scales of its armor reflected the golden sunlight. At its feet, small and to my eyes vulnerable, lay Alan. He did not move. Is he dead, I thought. The pain of loss ran through me.

My eyes ran with tears and stung. I could not put up a hand to wipe them, for I was clinging with precarious balance to the edge of the long drop from the dragon's cave.

Venom ran from the dragon's jaws. It dropped, hissing and steaming to the ground where Alan lay. "Oh move, my lord!" And he did, but barely and only slowly.

The beast rose above him. It was larger than my eyes could see in one terrified glance. There are words bards use to describe dragons. There are phrases they call upon time after time. They tell of wide reaches of leathery wings, arched and clawed. They tell of a head larger than the body of a horse, of a neck muscled and scaled, thicker around than the largest tree in the forest. They tell of the stink of the flames which issue from the maw of such a beast. They have not seen a dragon.

Had they, had they once come within sighting distance of a dragon, they would not tell of these things. They would tell, instead, in words which stuttered with fear, of the soul-chilling terror of the beast. They would tell of the stone to which their limbs turned, while their hearts and minds screamed for flight. They would tell how every purpose, good and ill, fled their hearts, blotted out by the immense shadow of a beast which should have lived only in legend.

I did not flee. I pretend to no nobility of heart. I would have fled had I the power to move, had I been able to get my paralyzed limbs to take me back down the mountain. But I could not. So I hung, shaking and weeping in my terror.

Alan moved again, hunching his shoulders, gathering his breath to speak. I could barely hear his words above the dragon's steaming pant.

"Poeir ti cloake, poeir for strengthū; ti ban faer!"

His words were soft, quiet, but bore, even to my untutored ears, a power. Through the sting of my tears, through the darkness of my fear, I could see that his sword arm was bent under him in a way that no arm should bend.

"Poeir ti cloake." I barely saw his lips move, his eyes were squeezed tightly shut, whether to lock out the sight of the dragon or to lock in his concentration, I did not know.

"Poeir for strengthū."

He asks for strength, I thought, and wondered how I knew. It was the language of magic which he spoke, a language foreign to me, and yet so haunting and familiar. I listened to Alan's words, repeated them in my heart, and took faint strength from them.

"Poeir ti ban faer . . ." His voice was

ragged and stumbling now.

Power to banish fear . . . There was no lessening of the fear in my heart. *Poeir ti ban faer,* I repeated silently. And there was, faintly, a softening of the terror which had turned my limbs to stone.

The beast turned its head as I watched, and the flame of its breath passed above us, close enough to scorch.

"Poeir," I whispered. *"Poeir for strengthu!"* Not breathing, not thinking of anything but Alan who lay at the feet of Death, I clambered upward, forcing my hands to grasp the crumbly shale, forcing my feet to find grips and hold them. I could barely control my limbs. Fear might have been lessened, but it was not banished. I stood upon the ledge and stumbled toward Alan.

"Poeir," I said, hearing my own voice as a weak croaking. *"Poeir ti ban faer, for strengthu!"* The dragon reared back again, beat its wings against the sky, and darted suddenly downward, fangs gleaming in the sharp light of day.

"Dragon! No! Dragon!" I screamed. I dropped to my knees beside Alan, and he twisted toward me, his face shaped by pain to one I hardly knew.

"What word, m'lord? What word?"

"Yield!" he gasped. *"Gielden."*

"Gielden!" I screamed. *"Gielden!"*

The dragon paused, its eyes gleaming with dark hatred. Alan grasped my wrist. "A spell, boy. A spell."

A spell? I knew no spell! But the words I had heard him use, those which I had repeated might be shaped into a spell, might they not? I took a long breath. *"Bi min poeir,* Dragon, *gielden!"*

It did not yield, but it drew back. The words arrested its dripping fangs, stilled, for a precious moment, that downward swoop which would have ended Alan's life. I leaped to my fear, scrambling in and under the enormous foreleg of the beast, running for Alan's sword. The stench of the dragon rose up and staggered me.

"Poeir ti ban faer." This time my chant was supported by Alan's voice. The ground beneath my feet seemed suddenly less solid, my breath was light in my chest. My head seemed filled with a frightening kind of light and fire. I darted beneath the dragon's leg, my arm brushing against scales which felt like armor. I snatched up the sword which lay behind the leg of the beast, just below the enormous sweep of its chest. Whirling, I tossed it to Alan who caught it, fumbling, in his left hand.

Spade-shaped and huge, the dragon's scaled head lowered, darting in and down toward where I cowered beneath it. Venom and flame dripped from its fangs, huge black eyes glittered and whirled as it sought me.

"Run, boy!" Alan cried. His voice was cracked with his pain, breaking up. There was an edge of desperate fear there. "Run, boy!"

But I could not run. Run to where? A dash forward or to either side would bring the dragon's huge head sweeping after me, fangs bared and seeking the taste of my blood. Where could I run?

"Poeir ti ban faer," I whispered. I was light with fear, and frozen with it. But as I spoke the words, I felt a part of me leaving, withdrawing from my body. Even as I realized this, I felt something new enter me, a power and a strange kind of strength which had nothing to do with strength of limb. It was a kind of strength of heart.

I took the deepest breath I could in the dragon-reek, glanced at Alan who was climbing slowly to his feet. His face was white and strained with fear and pain. He hefted the sword in his left hand, not his sword hand for that arm was broken and dangling at a sickening angle.

"Poeir," he gasped.

"Poeir," I said after him. *"Poeir for strengthū!"* The dragon's head was snaking closer, weaving back and forth now, seeking me and the best way to snatch at me.

I am too near his left, I realized, for him to risk a clear attack. Aye, and if I was behind the leg . . . I did not waste time on the thought, but darted behind the huge trunk of the foreleg. In the shadow of his leg and chest, I could hear the rumble of the bellow of rage which was working its way from the cavern of its throat. "Strike, m'lord! Strike now!"

He did not need me to direct his stroke. There is a place just under the jaw, a tender and vulnerable place where the scales of a dragon's armor do not quite overlap. It was that place Alan struck, thrusting his sword in with all the strength his left arm possessed.

He cried aloud, whether from pain or triumph, I could not tell. The stink around us grew and doubled. Black blood, hissing and steaming as it felt the cool touch of the air, ran down the dragon's neck.

"Get out, boy!" And as he needed no instruction from me to strike, I needed no warning from him to flee. The air was filled with the death screams, screams which rose higher and louder, filling the air until they were not so much sounds as feelings, not so much heard with the ears but felt in every part of my body and mind.

Out from under the bulk of the monster, crouching as close to the ledge of the cliff as I dared, I watched Alan follow up his advantage and strike again and again until the thing, its throat torn, its jugular in bloody shreds, reared a last time, blotting out the sun with the immensity of its bulk, and fell.

That fall, that crashing weight, sent me sprawling face downward, retching from the death-stench. I looked up, wiped dirt and sickness from my mouth, and saw Alan wiping his sword upon his cloak.

He stood, weaving upon legs which seemed about to fail him, caught his balance, and looked back at me.

"Heorte-cild," he said, his eyes bright in his pain-drawn face. *"Heorte-cild."*

Heart's child. The words were soft upon my heart. He staggered, stumbled once, and went into the dragon's cave. Heart's child. I do not know how long he was there, or what he did, for the thing that I called strength of heart had left me. My legs gave out and my sight grew dark. I fainted.

He told me he was angry, over and over, as he wiped my face clean. He told me he would dismiss me, for he had no need of a servant who could not follow orders. I knew he did not mean it, for his ministrations were tender and his eyes belied all of his words. I helped him down the mountain when we were both steadier, leaving behind us the reek and stink of the dead monster.

We did not find our horses until we were nearly a mile from the dragon's mount. When we did, I tore the spare shirt in my pack into strips to bind Alan's arm and form a rude sling. I helped him to mount carefully and led his horse while riding my own.

I told him that it was a miracle that the animals had not died from fear. He told me it was a miracle that I had not died from my own stupidity—and what did I think I was about disobeying his explicit orders? Had we both been killed, who would have gone to the King?

Alan looked at me then, and shook his head. "You do not understand."

"That is certain, m'lord. What did you seek in the dragon's lair?"

He smiled then and reached inside his cloak. He withdrew a small object, no

larger than an egg. From what I could see of it, it was a jewel, blue in color, and brilliant. But it did not seem valuable enough, as lovely as it was, to risk his life in the taking. He saw my judgment in my eyes.

"No, it does not look like much, does it?"

"It is beautiful. But no, I cannot think it worth your life, m'lord."

Alan laughed. "I assure you, boy, it is. I assure you that it would be worth the lives of a regiment to recover."

"But what is it, m'lord?"

"What?" He tucked the jewel back inside his cloak and pretended surprise at my question. "Could you, the great sorcerer that you are, not be aware of what I carry?"

"I am no sorcerer, m'lord," I answered, knowing even then that my words could not be true. "I only tried to help."

He softened, then. "Aye, you are, boy. And help you did."

I caught his meaning and shook my head again. Hope was balanced against fear. I could feel in memory the terrible feeling of draining and filling, that feeling that something I knew nothing about was lending strength to me. I shivered and told him that I only provided the distraction that he needed to kill the beast. But he did not agree.

"There is power in you, boy. The discovery was painful. Aye, I know that. But by its discovery, you have saved others such pain."

Alan reached out his good hand and lifted my chin, his eyes finding mine and holding them. There was, in his own eyes, a light of satisfaction. But when he spoke his words were wry and amused. "I recognized you, boy, when I first saw you. It took time, though, for you to recognize yourself."

"And the jewel, m'lord?" I turned the subject purposely, not wanting to dwell upon the power and the things it took in exchange.

His hand dropped to the place where the jewel lay within his cloak. "A key, boy. A simple key."

"To what, m'lord?"

"Why, to a treasure, of course."

I shook my head again. "It seems part of a treasure, not a key."

"Still, it is a key. It lay in legend as long as it lay in that dragon's hoard. Some said it was real, some said it was a fable."

"What does it do?"

He laughed aloud at that. Silently, he removed the jewel from its place of safety. "Put out your hand, boy."

Slowly I did. He dropped the jewel into my palm. It was cool and hard. But even as I thought it so, it began to gleam and grow warm. It took, quickly, the warmth of a living thing, and I knew that it should not have garnered the warmth of my own body that fast. Startled, I looked up.

"It is warm, m'lord. And see how it glows!"

Alan smiled, but it was not a smile of amusement, more one of gratification. He reached for the jewel again and let it sit, for a moment, in his own hand. It lost none of its glow.

"This might have told you something many months ago, boy, had we had it then."

"What, m'lord?"

"That you have the power. That you will make a good student."

"Student. What will I study?"

"Much. And it may be that you will teach us, as well. We are a much-maligned brotherhood, those of us with the power. Tricksters, conjurers, dabblers in evil, they call us." He laughed and it was a bitter sound. "But that will change."

"How?"

"With the help of the King. We will found an Order, an Order not of sorcerers and tricksters, but of men skilled in magic and of men who would seek the power to be found in truth."

"It is the King's will?"

"Aye, so it is. It is his mission you have saved, boy, as well as my own life. You will find us both grateful. They will call us tricksters no more, boy. They will call us wise men. Wizards."

Alan shifted uncomfortably in his saddle, and I knew that his arm pained him despite the bandage and sling that I had rigged. He gestured with his good hand and we stopped. He reached across the necks of our horses and placed his hand upon my shoulder. "You will be welcomed, boy, by the King."

"M'lord?"

"Aye, you will be. You will study hard, and you will someday make a fine wizard, boy."

I stared at him. There was a weariness in his voice and no prophecy. He spoke his words not in faith but from some sure knowledge. I, a wizard? I, part of a respected Order? I wondered what lay ahead to transform a thief and a servant into a wizard. But if he did not speak in faith, it was I who accepted in faith and in love.

That day I was content to simply travel with him. It took us more than a month of journeying to reach the court of the King. During that time we stopped in the villages and towns, listened to the gossip, and he healed. His great treasure he kept ever close to him, never letting it go from the safety of its place in his cloak.

It was upon that stone that our Order was founded. But it was not upon that stone that my own faith was founded. The base of my faith was Alan. I saw not, in those days, the founding of Orders. I saw only the beginning of a new place for me. And glimmering and new to me, I caught, through his eyes, and soon through my own, glimpses of my own soul: the soul I had feared he would take, the soul he had given me.

Many have come after me, many have loved him as I did, for ever did he inspire the love of those souls he sought to uncover. I have watched, in wonder and joy, as he brought, one by one, slowly and carefully, the many boys into our Order who gave it its strength and respected status. For me, however, those who came later were merely repetitions of the miracle that visited me that long-ago day.

For I, once a thief, lately a servant, was, that day, a Wizard's Boy.

Creatures

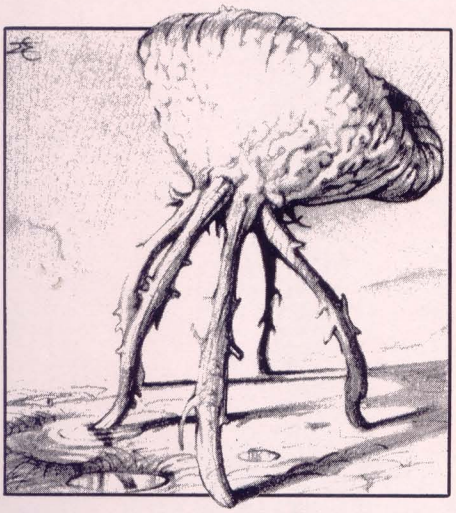
#51, Susan Shay Collins

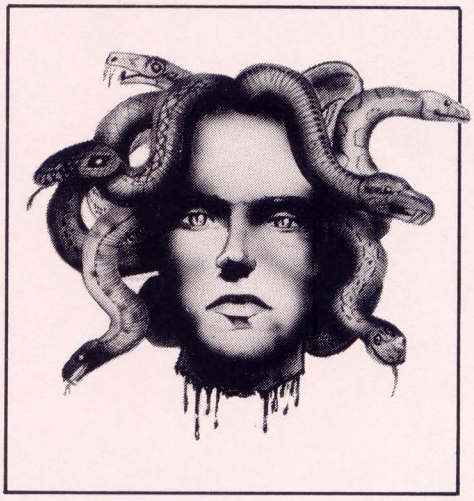
Illustration for "Dennim and the Golem," by Stephan Peregrine

Why Mammoths Became Extinct, #81, by Stephan Peregrine

Above—"Monsters of the Midway," an ettin, ready to tackle a bugbear, as a hydra referees; by Paul Sonju.

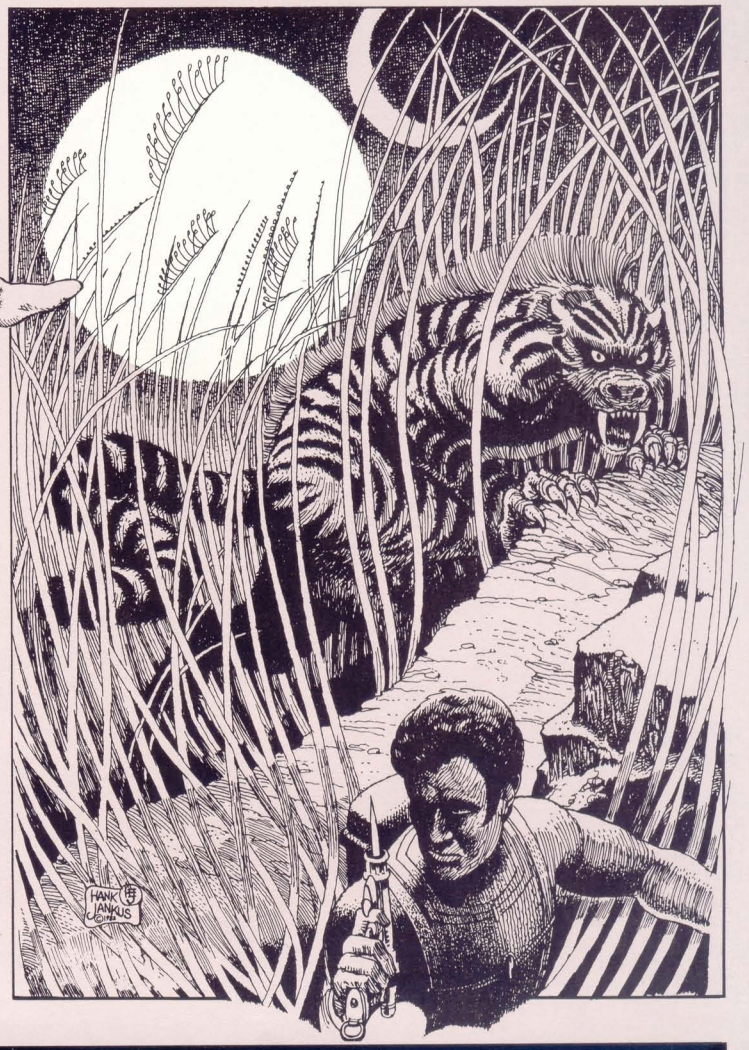
Left—Basidirond, by Jeff Easley; *Center*—Medusa, by David Larson; *Right*—Corkie, by Dave Sutherland



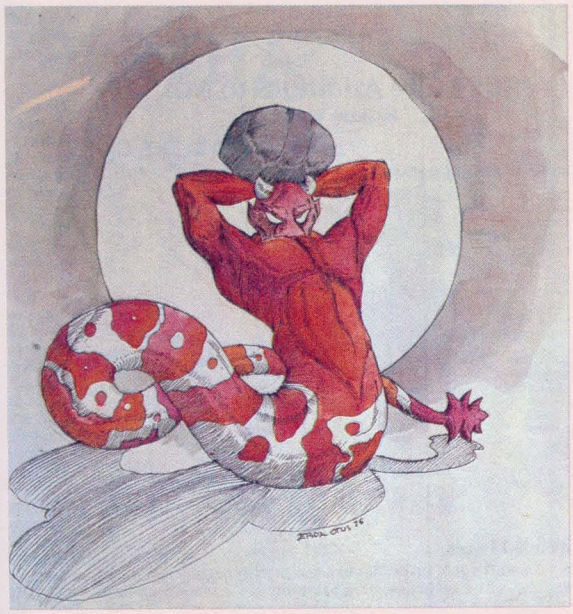


The Winged Folk, or *Al Karak Elam*, a race of demi-humans, by Todd Lockwood

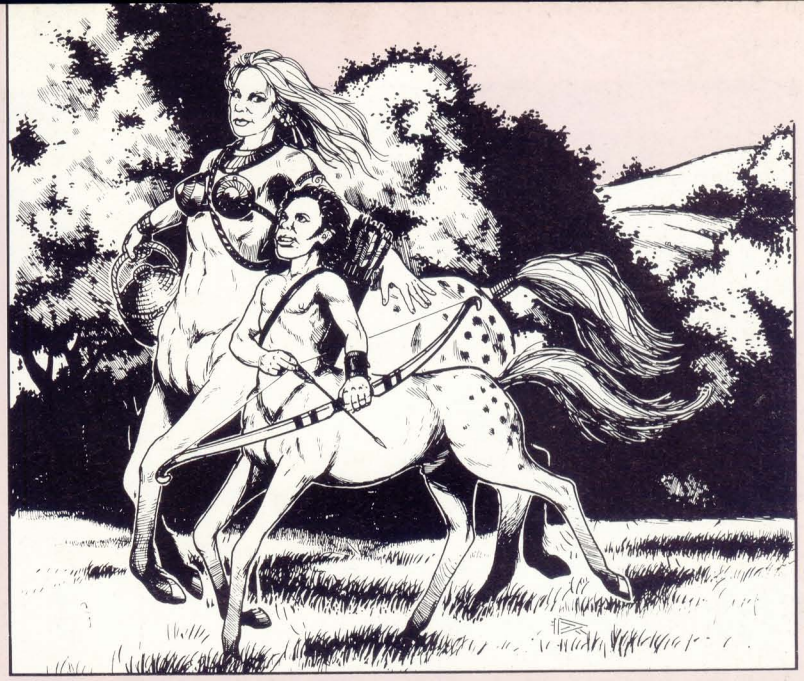
Below—Intruder, for Russell Madden's story, by Hank Jankus

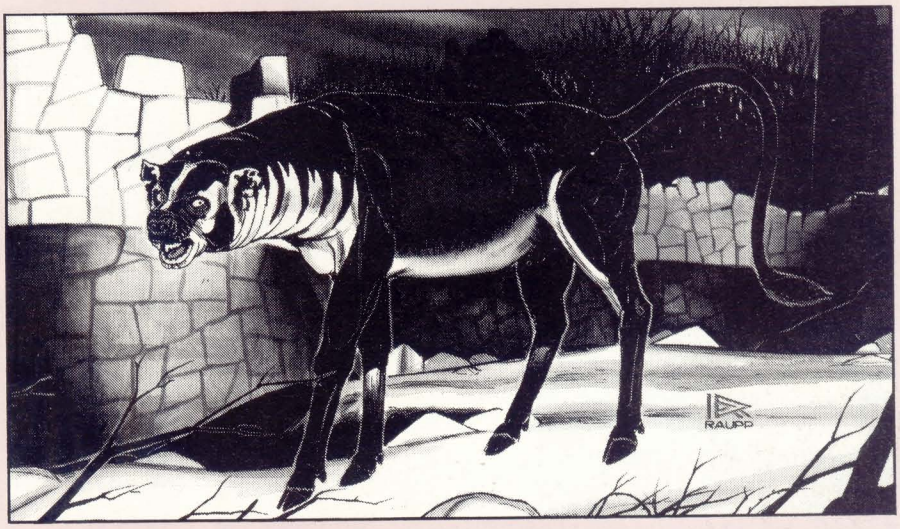


Bottom—a new monster created by Erol Otus for a name-that-monster contest. What would you call it?



#90, Jeff Busch





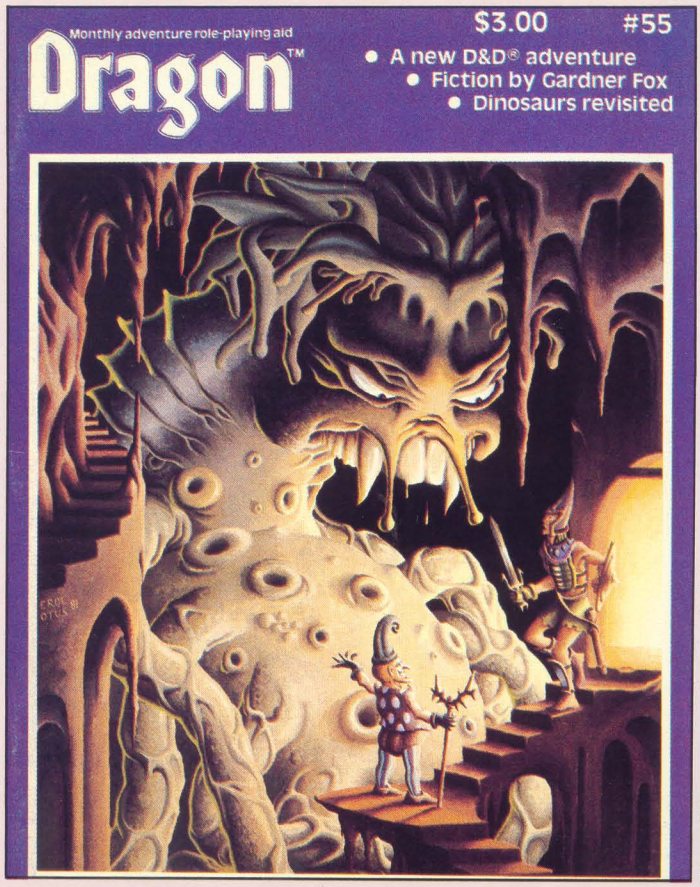
Above—The goat demon, a Chinese undead monster, by Darlene

Top right—A proud centaur mother takes her son on his first hunt, by Roger Raupp

Center right—The leucrotta, a wierd, lonely creature of desolate places, by Roger Raupp

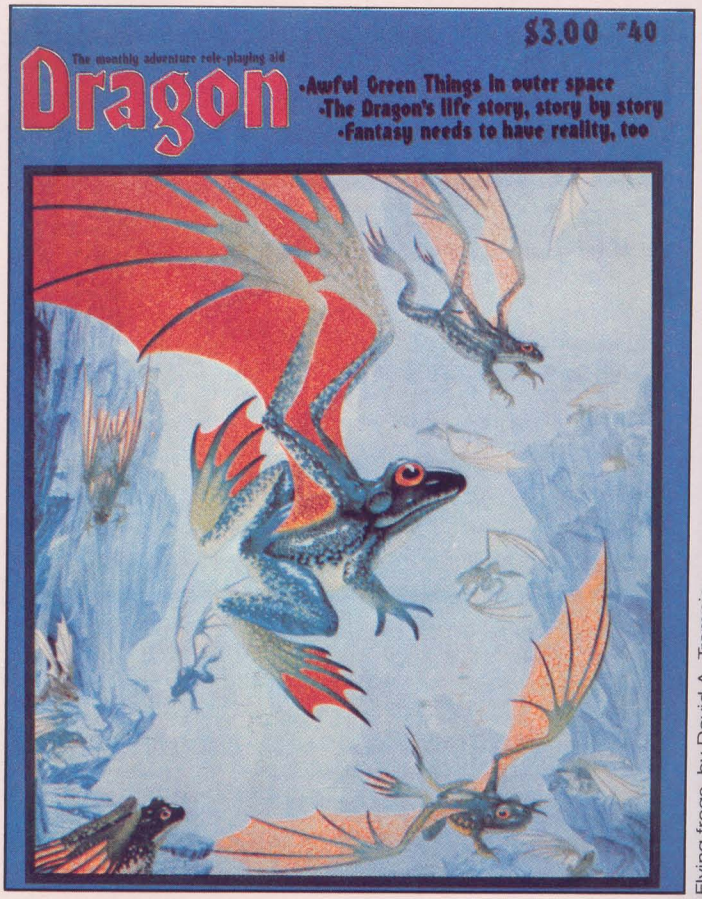
Bottom right—The unicorn, a favored creature of fantasy, by Roger Raupp

Ghosts, by Elrohir

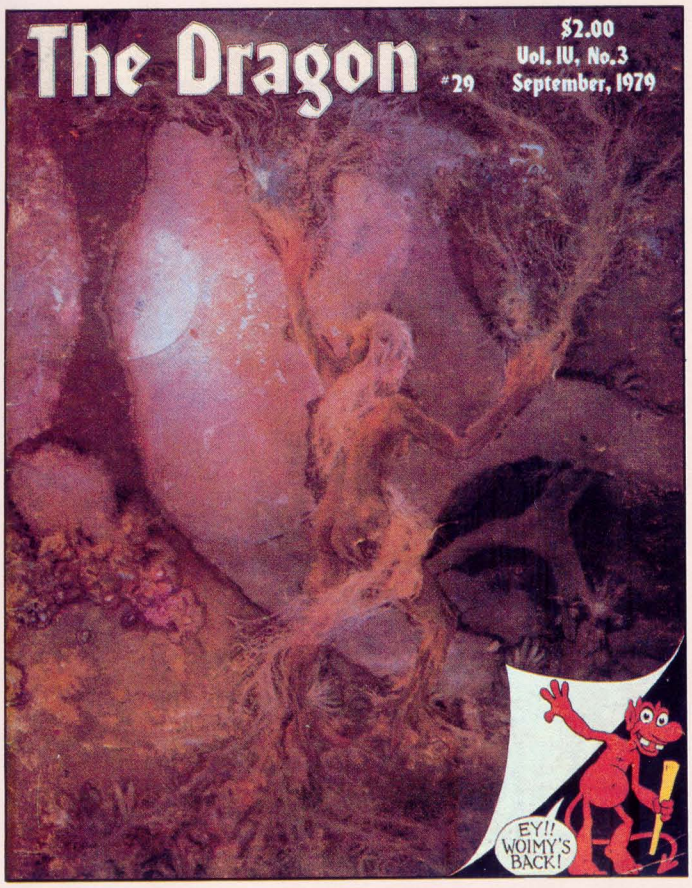


The artist's own creation, by Erol Otus

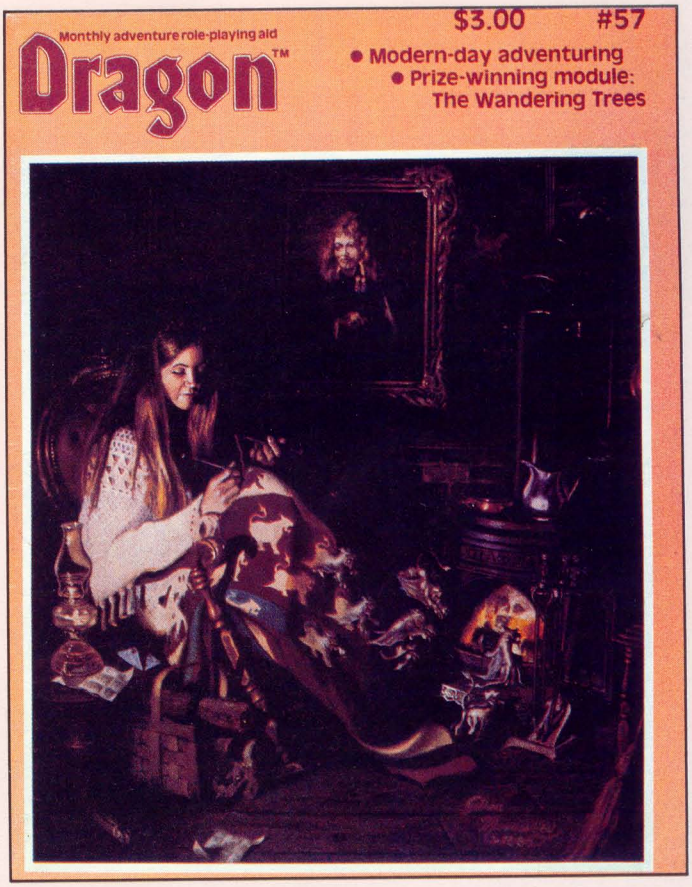
Undead skeleton, by Steve Oliff



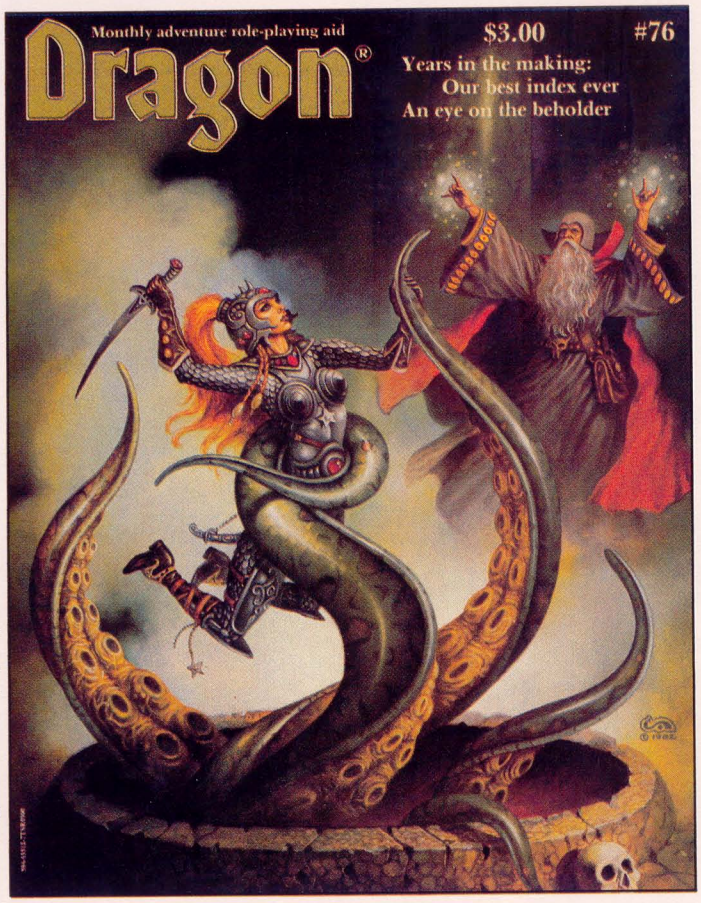
Flying frogs, by David A. Trampier



Earth elemental, by Dale Carlson



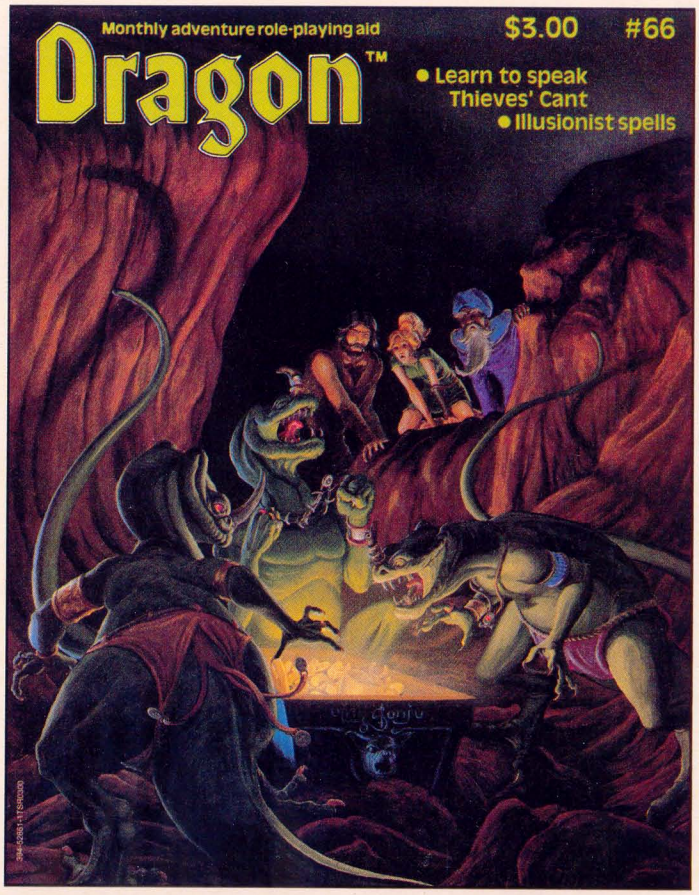
Diablo, by Dean Morrissey



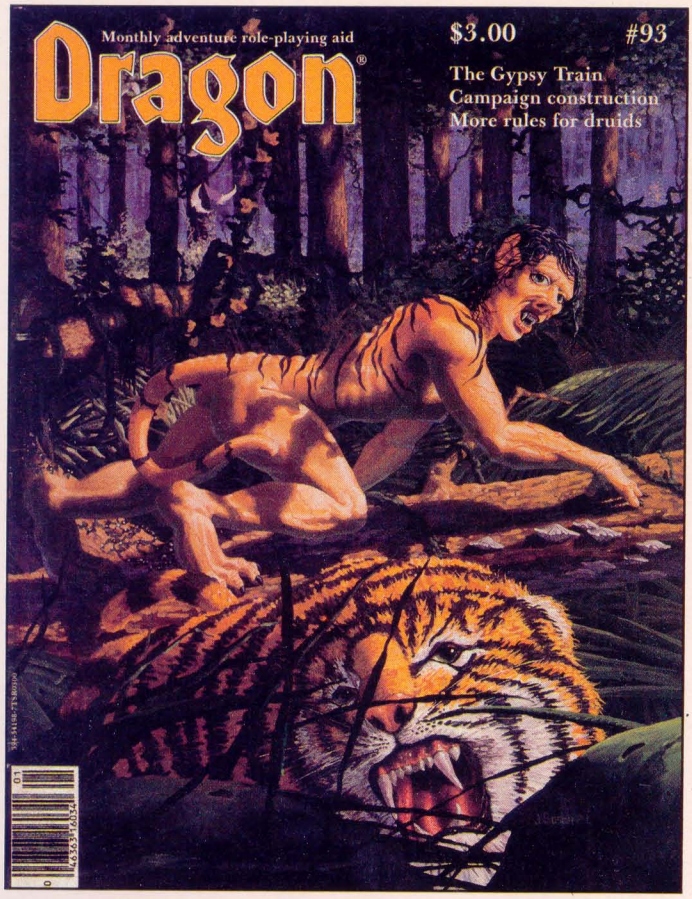
The Thing from the Pit, by Clyde Caldwell

Goblins, by Jim Holloway

Attack of the Taer, by Daniel R. Horne



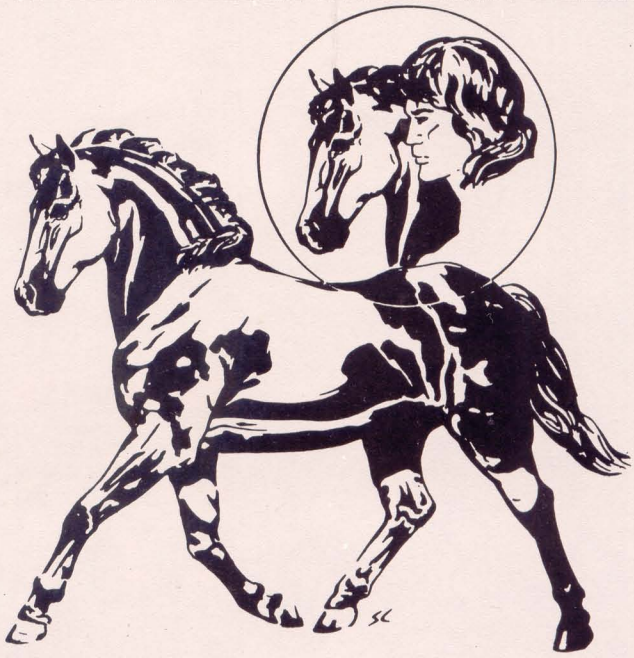
Paul Sonju

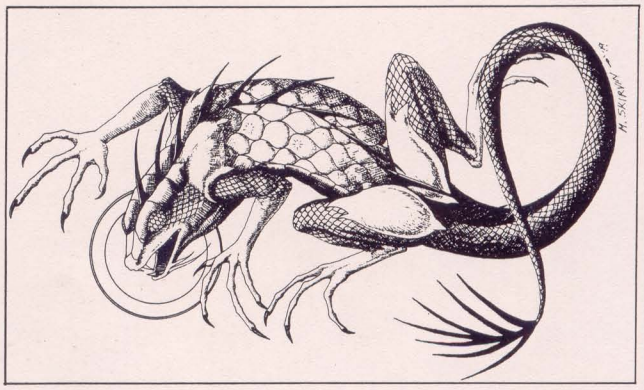


Tiger and weretiger, by Jeff Busch

Witch, by Mitchell

Deadly Encounter, David Martin





Above—The silkie, by Jim Roslof

Top right—The trapper, by Roger Raupp

Above Center—The water-horse, by Susan Collins

Left—The mind flayer, by Roger Raupp

Above—The stinger, by Mary Lynn Skirvin

Minions of the Demon Queen, #69, Clyde Caldwell

The demigods and deities of Greyhawk

The most thoroughly described dieties in the ADVANCED DUNGEONS & DRAGONS® role-playing game are those of the WORLD OF GREYHAWK® game setting:

Left—Norebo, the God of Luck and Gambling, by Harry Quinn

Center top—Istus, The Lady of Our Fate, by Jeff Easley

Center bottom—Olidammara, the God of Music, Revelry, and Roguery, by Jeff Easley

Right—Nerull, Foe of All Good, by Jeff Easley

Top left—Phyton, God of Beauty and Nature, by Jeff Butler
Top center—Obad-hai, God of Nature and Wildlands, by Jeff Easley
Top right—Wee Jas, Goddess of Magic and Death, by Jeff Butler
Center left—Syrul, Goddess of False Promises and Deceit, by Jeff Butler
Left—Heward, a quasi-diety, by Harry Quinn
Above—Erythnul the Many, God of Ugliness and Hate, by Jeff Easley
Bottom right—Jascar, God of Hills and Mountains, by Jeff Butler

Illustrations by Janet Aulisio

Valkyrie
by W. J. Hodgson

"Away, Lonn, into the sky," she cried, and her golden Lonn, fleet of hoof and wing, leapt into the morning air with equine joy to join the ride. The wind whipped at Fria's hair and robe and at Lonn's silky mane, and the tinkling of fetlock-bells rang clear and high. Fria cried out for the joy of flight and life and unsheathed her long, slender sword, cutting arcs of light to greet the rosy dawn.

Down Bifrost, the Rainbow Bridge, past vigilant Heimdall and the sea of space, and into the margin of the world they did glide. Across the early morning sky charged the ride of the Valkyries, swift Lonn along the lead, as always. Fria could feel his powerful strokes beneath her and the quiver of pleasure when he soared on the strong, icy breeze, and she smiled, for she knew he was the best of them all, a true son of his incomparable sire. She called him Lonn for his color and maple-sweetness, and no care was too great for her charger of the air.

She watched the land creep up beneath them as they swooped in high over the mountains, wondering how many folk looked up to see the northern lights in the gleaming of the sun off the Valkyries' pearly armor. That is all they would see of the Father's warrior maids, or at least all they would tell, for to meet one was death itself.

Down across the land they swept in long arcs of opalescence, silver, and feathery wings, with hooves and swords and winged helms to punctuate the symmetry. She looked back across the sweeping ranks and barely suppressed an unwarrior-like giggle of glee. The ground passed more quickly as they descended, until rushing by were rocky earth, ragged limb, clutching blade of brown, and at last the glint of rising sun on shield and blade.

The battle was already joined, and the first stalwart souls already rose to right and left, to be plucked away by her shield-sisters. Her own warrior yet struggled below, and she would have to wait, but she would not let even that spoil such a glorious day. He would die well, she knew, and she would find him by the ring of his great ax.

Yes, there he was, tall and proud. Ah, she had never seen a warrior more mighty or manly. No, no, not him, beside him, the smaller one. Yes, he just felled the dark chieftain in a valiant rush, and then there was the spear, from behind, for none would dare to face those two, after such a victory.

The barest nudge sent Lonn gliding in a circle down to land nearby, and she dismounted and approached slowly. He looked up, and she knew his name: Baldan, a most worthy name for one whom the similar-named Brave God of Beauty would be proud.

"Ah, Gunalf," he said, blood at his lip and pain as much as awe in his eyes, "she comes."

"Who, Baldan? Who comes?" cried the other, larger man, holding his friend and pushing the hair from the paling face. "We are alone now. You have blown the fight from them."

"Gunalf, she is there, do you not see her?"

Gunalf looked up, obviously more for his shield-brother's comfort than from expecting to see anything. Fria's breath caught, for he was indeed a fine man, this Gunalf the Mighty.

"Yes, she is tall and shapely slender and perilous and lovely, is she not, Baldan?" he asked, though his eyes betrayed him. Perhaps he saw as much as a pearly gleam. Probably not, lest his time was near as well, and it did not seem so.

"Tall and beautiful as a golden sunset touched with a blush of dawn and the warmth of afternoon," Baldan said. Then he clutched the other's arm as tightly as he could. "And there behind her is her mount, with wings of white and rose and eyes as bright as a man's. But they come for me, do they not, old warder?"

Gunalf choked on his words but finally managed to speak. "Aye, old ward, she knows a mighty one bound for Valhalla when she sees one, this lovely wench. She will bear you gently, for you are a good man and have been a precious friend."

Baldan died in his arms, satisfaction on his face.

Gunalf looked about, as though searching again for the vision he could not see. "Yes, take him. Feed on the death of a good man, then go, and plague the land of the living no more, foul wraith of the Endless Hall."

Fria stopped short in her reaching out toward Baldan, stung by the words. Why should this man—any man—resent her for bearing a soul to far greater glory than Hela's cold grasp would give? She wished to speak with him, but he could hear her no more than see her, and all she could do was listen.

"Death-monger," he spat, peering closely a moment before huddling over his friend's body. "I cannot stop her, Baldan. She will take you and leave nothing behind but an empty shell of blood and bone for a futile, Viking burial. I should have guarded your back, but I have failed." His light hair hung down to conceal his face, but his shoulders betrayed his weeping.

Troubled, she took Baldan and fled, amidst the host of the Valkyries, into the northern sky toward Asgard and Valhalla.

Baldan fit in as well as any there, and Fria was proud to loose him into the great host. She remained troubled, though, by words of a mortal man far away within the margin of the world. Why had he been so cruel? And—could there have been a modicum of truth to his surly words?

She tried to forget him, throwing herself into the supervision of the men and her care of Lonn and the Hall, and she might have succeeded as she had whenever troubled before, if not for the dreams. A mortal's strong body stalked them, and a mortal's face haunted her, lingering even after waking. The brightest light of the high sun could not wash away his angry eyes, nor could even the frigid blasts of the waste of north Asgard blow away his accusing words. She rode, she fought in the trials, and she collected seven souls from the war against the little lord of Sjorvik, but still she had no peace.

She missed an appointment, and nothing was said. She let a hero suffer on the field when she ought not, and there came only the slightest of questionings. She struck out in anger, killing a dozen before being quelled by a sister—small moment, since any falling on the enchanted field rose at day's end to laugh in the Hall with their slayers and prepare for yet another day of trial and skill-sharpening for the great fight to come—and many a cold stare stung her back as she limped from the grounds. She would search out Lonn, for he, as always, was her only comfort.

Halfway to the grazing hills, she came across a cloaked man, tall and broad but bent and seemingly old beneath his heavy cloak. "Hail, grandfather," she said and made as if to pass.

The hooded head straightened a bit. "A moment of your time, pretty one," said a voice from the shadows, a strong voice but obviously old.

She could not be impolite, though she wished no company but her fleet, kind Lonn. "A moment is but a small request," she said, swirling the fur-trimmed bottom of her long, blue, enchanted robe away so that she could sit near him on the broad stone. For some reason, she was suddenly weary, and she took off her helm, shaking her glorious gold-blonde hair loose from its braids and down about her shoulders, then resting her tired hands in her lap. She no-

ticed blood stains on the one, her sword hand.

"So you have killed today," the old man said, not in question. Glancing toward him, she saw how very much bigger than she he was. One of the older Gods, then, undoubtedly due more reverence than she was showing. "Does it trouble you, child?"

She got the impression he already knew any answer she might have given. "Life and death trouble me. It is my lot to take souls, and I mistreat none—or had not until today—but how do I have the right?"

"Does not the duty of the Valkyrie come by birth and by the will of He who rules them?" Something in the old man's voice troubled her almost as much as that other voice, but she tried to find a suitable, respectful answer.

"Aye, we serve the Father and love Him dearly—I at least as much as any, which any would testify to."

"But?"

She did not wish to answer. She should not burden the old fellow with her trivial problems, which were to her intensely personal and indeed difficult to share. His voice, however, held her, compelled. Yes, this one was a God. "But I have been accused of death-mongering and wraithdom, and I did indeed take much pleasure in the riding of the host and the ringing song of battle."

"Did?" Funny that he should question only that portion.

"A cruel mortal he was, for I have no more pleasure in anything. Even the nagging vision of his beautiful face haunts me, ruins all the little joys the Blessed Realm once held."

"Of what account the words of a cruel man? To give them heed is to give them weight. To falter in your duty thanks to them is to give them authority. To betray your liege because of them is to make them a God in His place."

She shrank back, her eyes widening and filling with tears. "I would sooner be crushed under Mjolnir or thrown to the bed of Loki or Garm than so much as give Father the wrong time of day. Please, say no such thing, lest some ill wind damn me for causing their utterance, as well it should."

The old man's pose seemed to soften. "Fear not, pretty one. You are stronger than you think. You need not be haunted by a mortal spectre. I give it leave to go, for you are lovely and innocent, and harsh words are unworthy of your ears. I allow it here never again, as I allow no ill winds in My realm."

Then it was that she caught the glint of a single eye deep within the shadows of the hood, as the slumped shoulders straightened to their full height. She slid from the rock and abased herself at the All-Father's feet. "Strike me down, Father, lest I betray You and be beneath hatred, scorn, and even damnation."

Strong hands, infinitely strong, lifted her gently to her feet as though she were less than a feather. A long, kind finger lifted her chin as the other hand eased back the hood to reveal the gleaming helm and white-bearded, one-eyed visage of Odin. "Go to your little pony, Lonn, foal of Sleipner, and fear not for yourself. Your Father will watch your steps and catch you if you fall. Did you not know?"

He wiped the streaming tears from her fair, downy cheeks and wiped the very need to cry from her heart with a warm smile.

"To be smiled upon by my Father is to make all the length of my existence worthwhile, whatever I might do."

He smiled again and started her on her way, and she resisted the urge to call him anything as familiar as *Daddy.*

Lonn was as ecstatic to see her as ever, and the day passed swiftly and in joy, with only a dim memory of a warrior's face which held no sway over her save a vague hint of a woman's yearning. That was not unpleasant for the passing of the day, and then another, and another, until the fourth day, when a mighty blizzard swathed the margin of the world and the summons came.

Into the teeth of a storm no doubt raised by the thrashing of the world-long Jormungandr himself, they flew, Lonn whinnying his disquiet as he sought for the easier currents. All the world was darkness and slashing snow, for night had come by the time they reached down to the northern mounts. She would find her charge, though. It was impossible for her not to, storm or no. Thor the Thunder God might revel in such mucky murk, but she wished the whole of the host were there so that together the magic of the wing might cut a clearer way. Such aid was far from hand, though, leaving naught for it but to forge ahead through the night.

Once they burst from the reek nearly to slam into a ribbed wall of rock, but Lonn knew his business, and on they went, carried racing forward by the rush of wind within the narrow canyon they had dropped into. It occurred to her suddenly that this solo foray on the heels of her troubled heart probably was no coincidence. A test, then, a test of her desire to do her duty. A simple test, and one she would complete whatever else might arise. Her palms began to tingle with anticipation of the soul she must bear, and she knew they were close upon their charge. Lonn furled his wings and hit the ground at a run, charging into a grove of—thank Father for a fair sign—a stand of maples.

A small clearing opened out, and there lay the lone warrior she had come to find. About him was the evidence of his prowess and doom. A score of bodies lay strewn across the lawn, lit with gruesome starkness by ruddy torches in the hands of twelve more men. They all wore armor of close-fit leather, with wooden shields and broad-bladed axes at hand. Just then, though, they fought over their hard-won spoils. The fallen warrior had been richly clothed, and they argued over who was to have what gem or which weapon even as the storm beat down into the clearing, setting the torches to hissing and smoking from the striking snow. Two still picked over the vanquished valiant, yanking from his neck a tiny jeweled hammer.

Fria clenched her anger, slipped off Lonn, and stepped across bodies. The two men abruptly stood up. The fallen warrior, wounded in many places and with a badly broken leg, had opened his eyes to gaze at his killers. As the two reached for their weapons to finish him once and for all, save his journey to Valhalla and the great battle at the end of time, he caught sight of her standing there some ten paces away. As their eyes met, she knew his name: Gunalf the Mighty, bearer of a jeweled hammer, which is a symbol of Thor the Mightiest.

His eyes blazed in anger and a hint of impossible recognition—but nothing to compare with her rage. Out swept her blade and a cry of battle. Lonn reared and screamed his accompanying wrath, and his neigh shook the very ground.

The twelve started and fumbled for their weapons, for even they could hear the unveiled wrath of a Valkyrie and a foal of eight-legged Sleipner. Her blade swept through both of those nearest Gunalf, and the two meager spirits quailed and fled, leaving the empty, untouched bodies to collapse among their fellows. She cried again, filled with the lust of killing, and the villains fled before a nemesis that was naught to them but an angry pearly glow and a whisper of wings.

Turning, the desire to kill rushed from her as she saw her Gunalf fighting to keep open his eyes. She rushed forward to kneel before him.

"So," he said, none too strongly, for while all his wounds were in his limbs, she could tell that any move or effort caused him much pain. "So you have come for me now. You are she who took Baldan, are you not, wench?"

She nodded. "But why speak harshly to me, one who does only the will of her Father?"

He tried to laugh. "An easy excuse. Just do your job now, as well. I tire of the pain."

"I am sorry. It is not for me to hasten a hero's first end. I must wait."

He laughed again, with even less vigor. "Hand me my knife, then, that I might let you get on with your pleasant task."

"I find no joy in this, mortal, less even in this taking than that other, and I have never liked the death, though some do. I try to see only the glory of the heroism, and the need and right of the readying in field and Hall for the great fight to come."

He said nothing, but his look was sour. She wondered how he had gotten in such a difficult situation, far in the harsh north, alone against so many ill folk. He seemed to wish death, and perhaps that is why he had ventured alone and fallen. She would not have been sent for one whose spirit had broken, though, even if it had been broken at the death of so valiant a friend as Baldan. She looked at his bleeding, broken leg, the worst of his wounds, and she knew he would not live long unaided.

"And have you found what you sought in the frozen waste, Gunalf the Mighty?"

He humphed, then grunted in pain. "I failed, of course, just as I failed before. I hadn't even the hardiness to reach the thief's —murderer's—strong place, but fell to his lackeys ten leagues from the door. I had no way to guard my back, and these are unhampered by qualms about striking from behind—not even savagery, just cowardice and cunning." He tried to gesture at his fallen enemies but failed in his weakness.

"Methinks you have won a victory of sorts here, warrior, and you have won a place beside your friend among the Einheriar of Valhalla. For what more could one ask?"

"Revenge for a slain brother."

She nodded a second time, slowly, understanding at last. He had cursed her for his own failures. And she was the one who had taken young Baldan from his very arms, and the arms of the older brother who had no doubt held him in swaddling, warded him through childhood, been appointed by their mother to protect. Fria lowered her head and fought the desire to cry. A Valkyrie would not cry for her charge. To give heed would give weight. She could not help it, though: she did feel responsible, somehow, and she could not bear his sore plight. With the blade of a nearby dagger, she cut her white bear-fur muff into strips and bound his wounds. He said nothing, for which she was glad. When she realized he was shivering with the cold of the storm and blood-loss and harrying death, she removed her robe and covered him with it. Enchanted warmth would ease him.

And then she sat back. Her eyes widened, and she cried. The tears froze on her cheeks, though, for now she felt the cold as it was, fierce and deep-biting. Unlooking, she groped for the hilt of her long sword. She had betrayed her Father after all, and no end could be swift or cruel enough.

Glancing up into the storm, she commended her fate to the lowest of Hela's pits and raised her blade. Above her, though, the murk swirled and shaped itself into a huge, bearded, helmed countenance, in which only one eye could be seen.

She dropped her head and wept more icy tears as the words of the All-Father settled about her. "So, child, you know you have sinned, and you think you have but to slay yourself to right matters." It was not a question, but neither was it a statement of indisputable fact, which from Odin would have indeed been indisputable.

"Father, I have sunk lower than is worthy of Your gaze. What course is there for me but ending my unworthiness?"

"And give Hela the victory? She's an attractive-enough wench when she wants to be, but hardly worthy of the innocent likes of you."

"Innocent?" she asked, though if the All-

Father said it, it must be so.

"Until this decision, when your innocence must fall away in a choice of faith or disrespect. Will you abandon your duty and responsibility for one man's short life?"

She could not answer. She could never really disobey her Father, but every fiber called out against letting this wronged man die.

"And withal, will you defy Me for any man?" Neither His voice nor His gaze hardened, but his words nonetheless shook her to the ground.

"Never," she whispered into the frozen earth, wishing He would destroy her utterly. In so short a time, existence had decayed to this.

"Rise, then, child. You are by birth the chosen of the God of the icy north, and your soul is Mine to dispose of, not your own. How say you?"

She stood slowly, then turned to Gunalf, who was watching her with utter awe. He obviously neither saw nor heard any God, but her words and manner had been unmistakable in the circumstances. He made no protest when she pulled her robe away, spat no accusation when she reached to untie his bindings while wiping away icicle tears that quickly grew again. Whatever happened now, she wished no more existence. Nothing. She had betrayed her Father, and now she betrayed her—love.

"Hold," boomed the voice from the sky, and even Gunalf froze and looked aloft. She could have done nothing but obey, regardless of her own desire. Even the storm had died, stilled by a single, omnipotent word of command.

"Look at me, child."

She turned her head up to her Father and, through strength of will, forced her tears to stop. She could not put defiance in her eyes, but meekness would not come, either.

"A bargain," He said. "Will you suffer his mortal fate to save him?"

"Yes," she said without hesitation.

"No," Gunalf muttered, evidently now hearing all that passed. He was ignored, though, for it was not really his fate at stake.

"Done," came the now-tremendous voice.

She looked down at Gunalf. "I regret not my love for you, nor this small sacrifice. Live for me, Gunalf." She swept her robe over him once again.

She expected some bolt to strike her down, and the storm did begin to rage about them again, but neither bolt nor death came to her. She stood in the wind, listening to the receding tinkling of the bells tied into the long hair of Lonn's fetlocks as—as he left her there. At last too long had passed, and she knew she was to live. Of course. They would be mortals together, she and her Gunalf, and when he died, so would she.

Shivering, she crept over beside Gunalf and snuggled into the robe beside him to pass the cold, stormy, fateful night.

And even so they lived and loved and fought, side by side, until they became a legend in the north. She tasted his vengeance at his side, and tasted his victory and lust for life, and joy walked with her as well. Still her heart yearned for her Father—and how could it not?—but she loved and lived with Gunalf the Mighty, seemingly a very scion of Thor, and she had always trembled at the sight of the God of Thunder.

In the end, he fell to save her life in battle on the sea, and she emptied the raiders' ship in retribution, though it did not assuage her pain or anger or loss. Fires raged fore and aft, but she let the ship burn, knowing she must die, too, to fulfill the bargain. For the first time in seven years of mortality, she cried, for she had been caught in Gunalf's love of life, but she let the ship burn in the age-old Vikings' funeral.

The wind picked up, whistling about her as it fanned the flames. She listened to the wind, remembering days she soared above it, and days she lay in a man's arms within it on a summer height or hidden away beneath it in front of their own hearth—at least there were no children to leave behind, though she was not altogether pleased by even that, despite Gunalf's never once complaining. The wind seemed to be calling to her, and she listened to its voice.

"What do you, daughter?" and she dropped to her knees. "I thought we had a bargain."

"I—I am fulfilling it, Father."

"Oh, so lovely and valiant, courageous and sweet, strong-willed yet soft, brilliant yet innocent still and missing her Father's mark again."

She seemed to hear bells on the wind then, and that brought more memories and one last tear.

"You are alone here, and there is a stalwart warrior who must rise forth to Valhalla. We will need such heroes on the day of Ragnarok, but even now Hela reaches for his valiant heart. By your oath of birth, pretty one, My precious child, bring him and delay not, or I shall reconsider My decision to have *you* be his special overseer."

"But," she called, daring to dispute, "but, Father, I am no longer a maid, and I have questioned."

The wind seemed to chuckle. "No, no longer innocent in some ways, yet still sweet, now fine as steel. Will not gentle good be needed for rebuilding after Ragnarok takes your old Father? I knew as well as the Norns that one day one would grow, mature, evolve to lead for Freya's ease in the long wait and in the days beyond her. Your Father is pleased that it is you."

And then the wind was but wind, though the tinkling bells still approached from on high, the sweetest music she had ever heard.

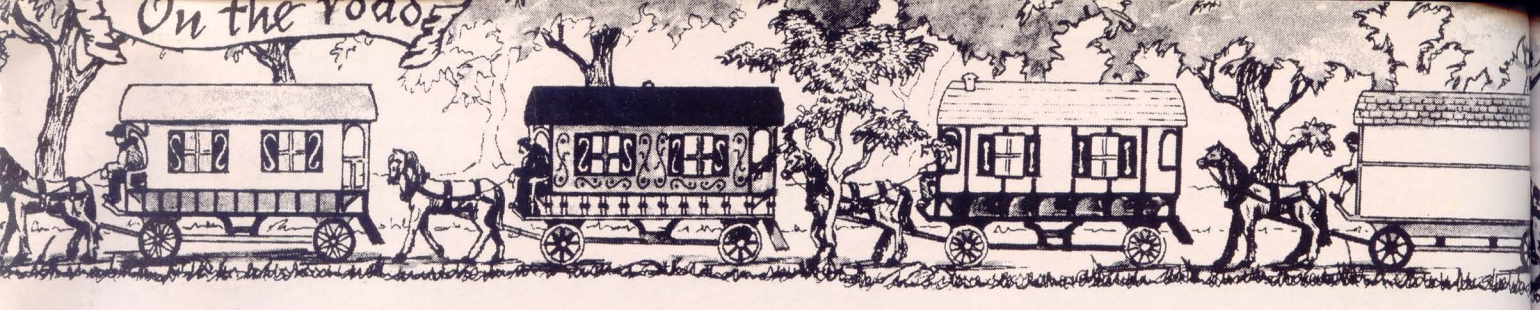
Turning, she shivered, but the day was warm and the fires hot, and it was joy she felt. She looked about and said, "Let me see now. Somewhere amongst all this rabble is a man."

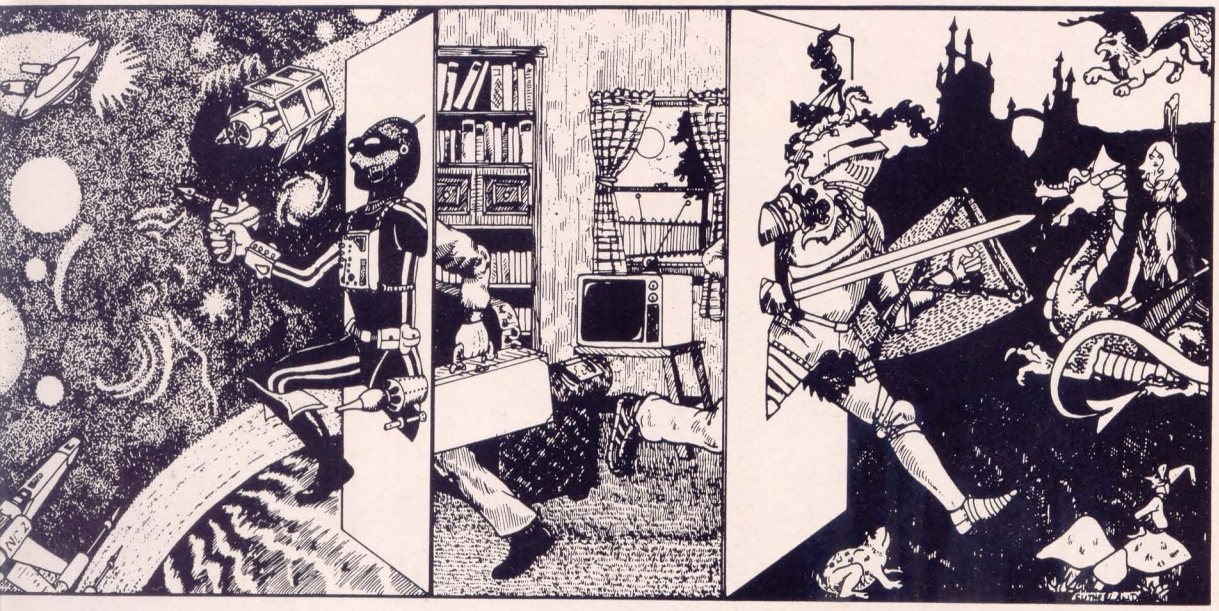
She picked her way daintily across the smoldering deck, turning up her little nose at the reek of burning blood, and soon reached Gunalf.

"Father wants him," she said, reaching out, her fair face alight with a glowing smile, "and so do I."

Miscellany

Wingship, #91, Dean Morrissey



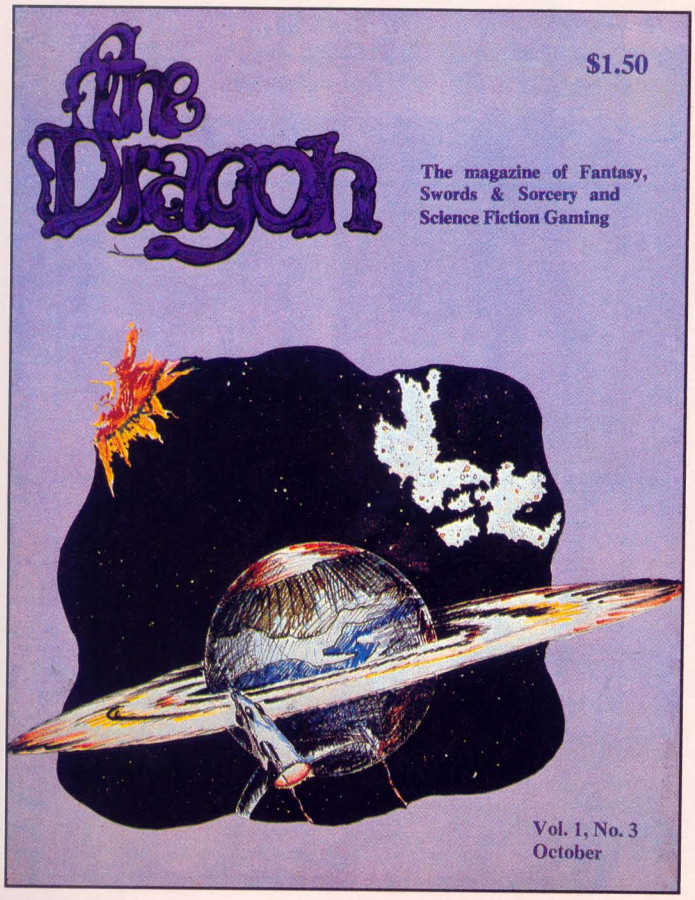


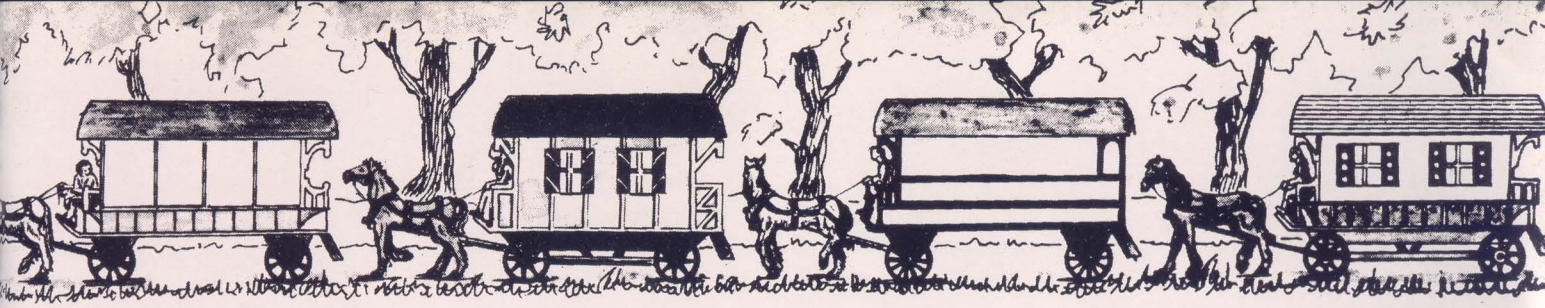
Above—*The Gypsy Train* module setting, by Bob Maurus

Left—Several faces of DRAGON® Magazine, by Dave Sutherland

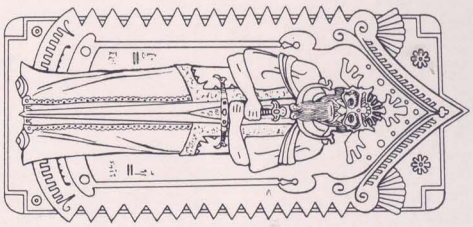
Bottom left—Science fiction setting, by Seaton/Janci

Bottom right—A landgrant script for *Empire of the Petal Throne*, by M. A. R. Barker





Out on a Limb



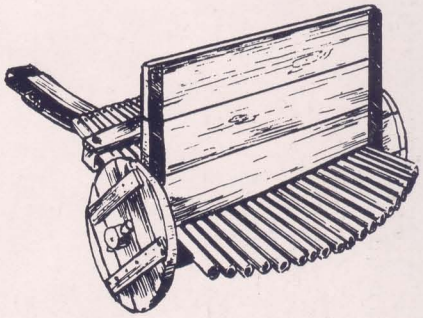
Top right—Sarcophagus for "Minarian Legends," by Kenneth Rahman

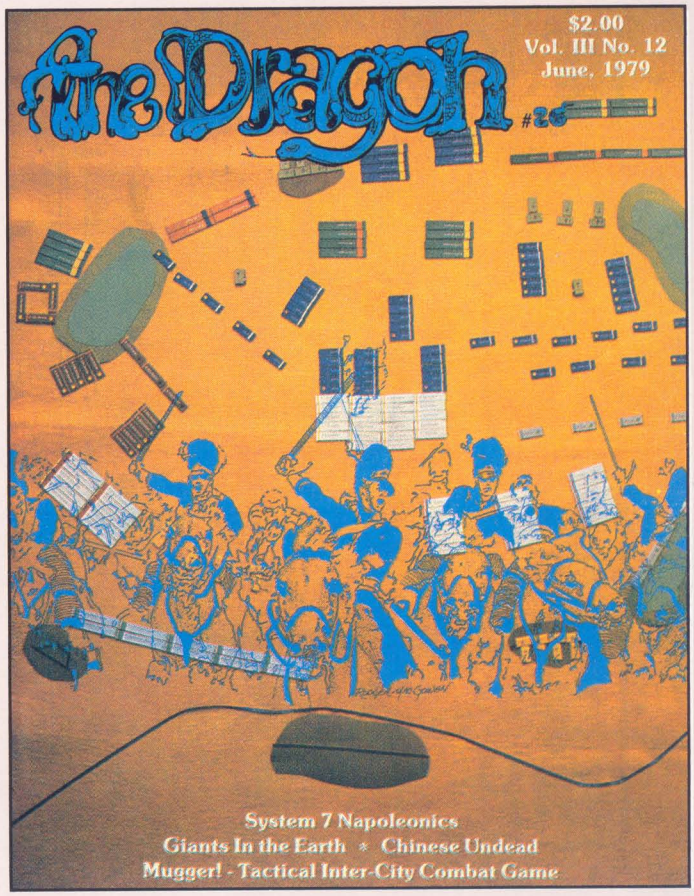
Above—Letters column logo, by Darlene

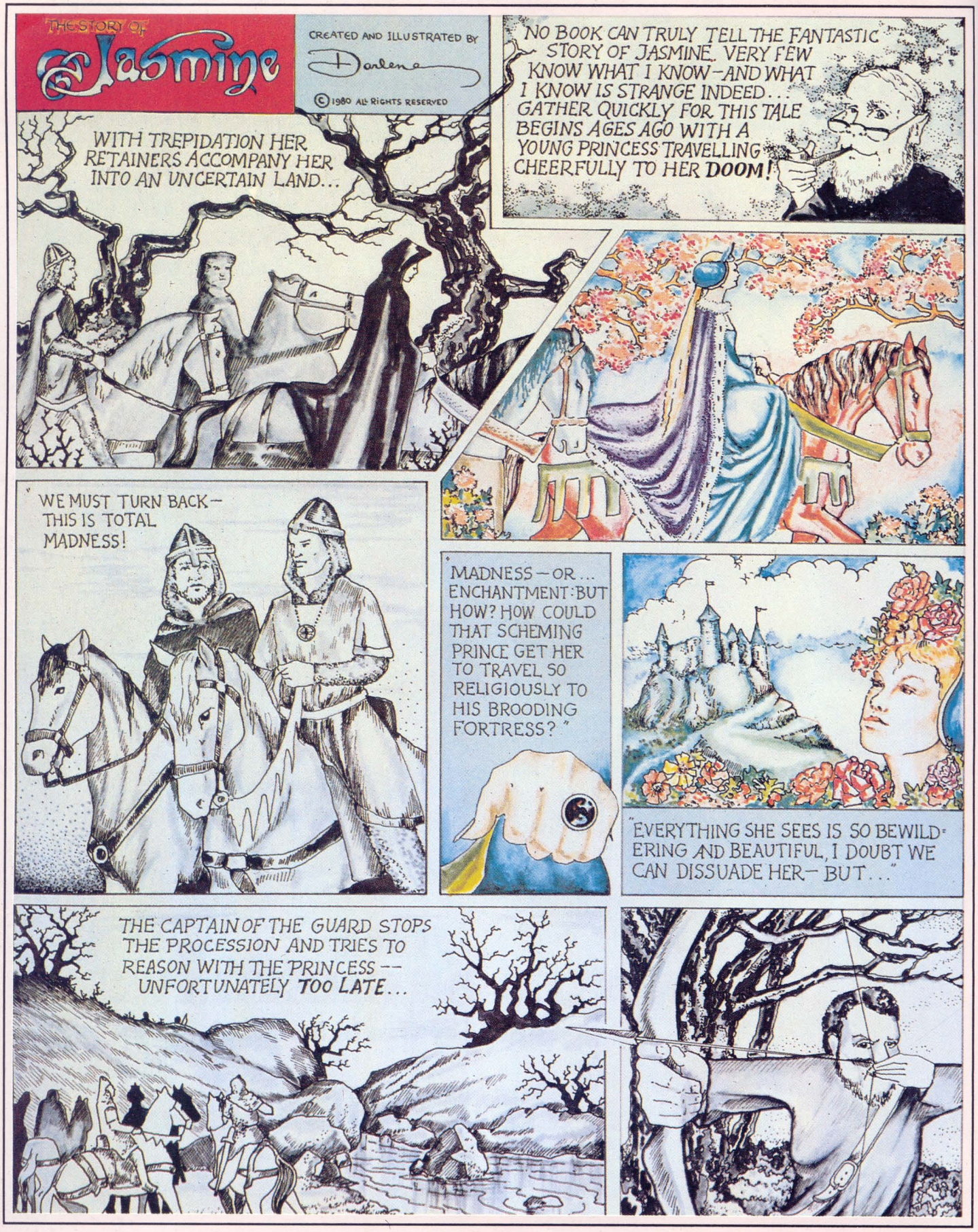
Far right—The ribald, a weapon, by Roger Raupp
Bottom left—Travel can be dangerous, by Elrohir

Bottom right—Art and boardgame pieces combined, by Rodger MacGowan

Ornamentation on a trollish weapon, from "Minarian Legends," by Kenneth Rahman






THE STORY OF
Jasmine
CREATED AND ILLUSTRATED BY
Darlene
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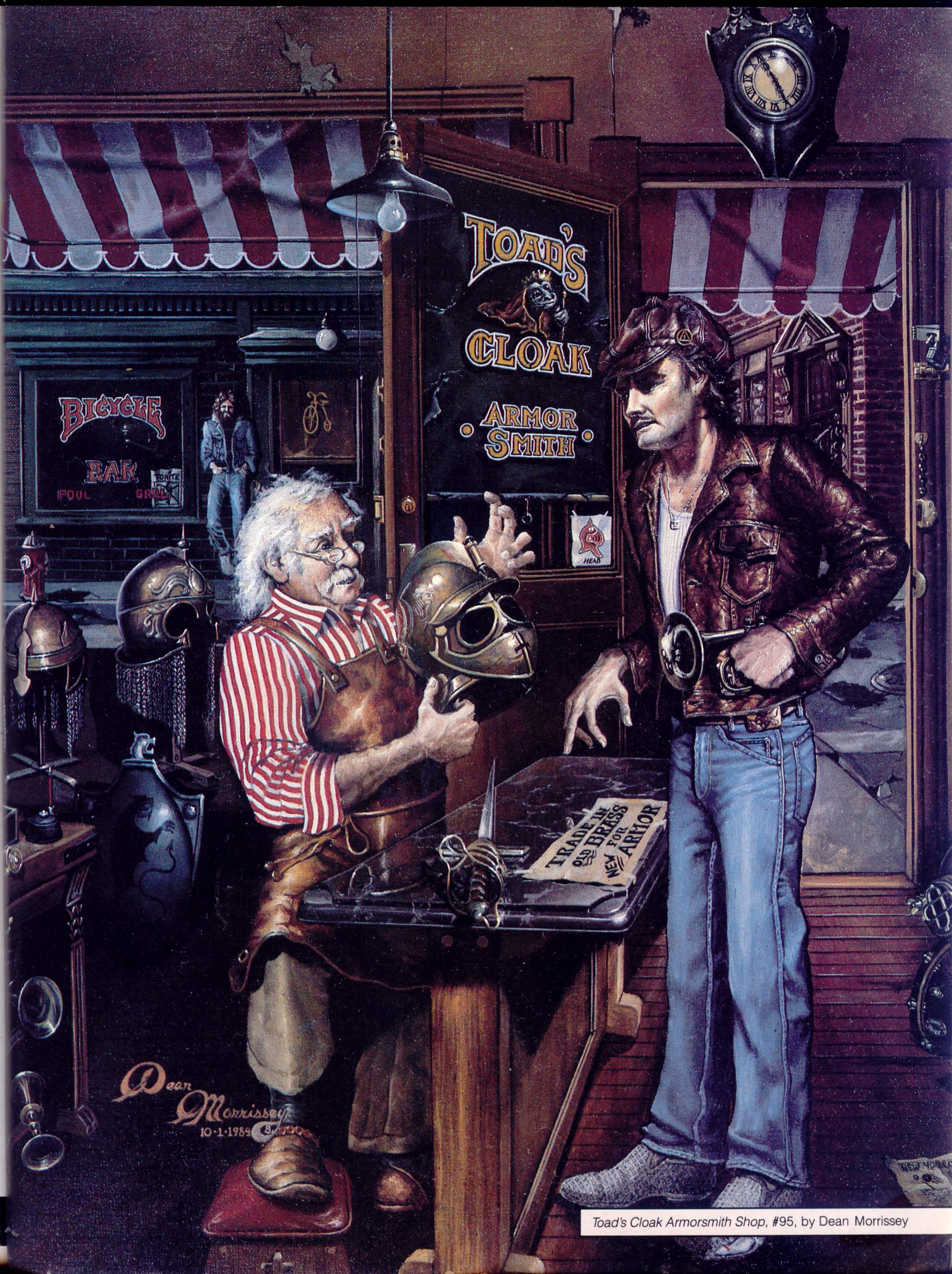
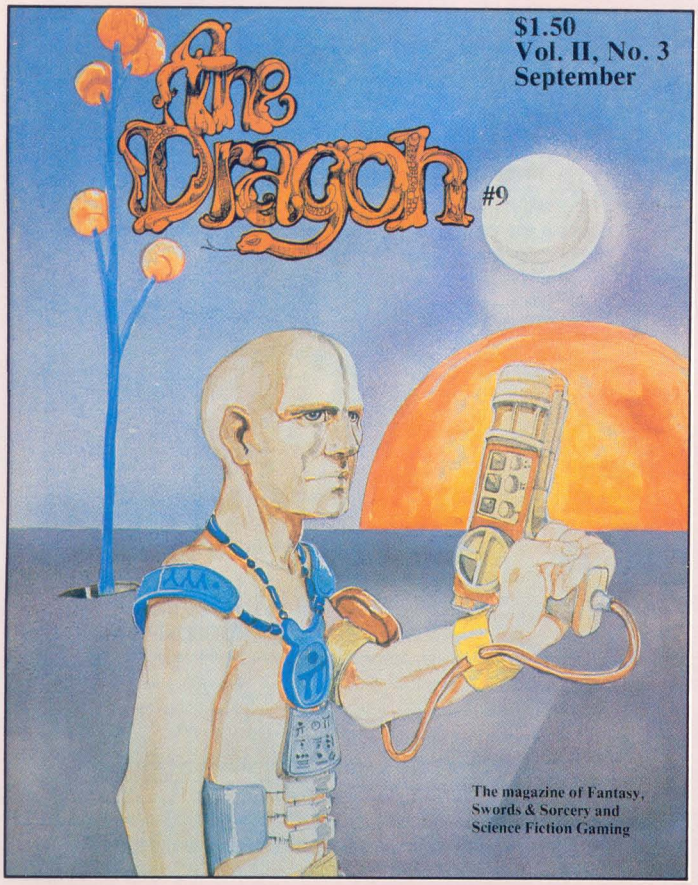
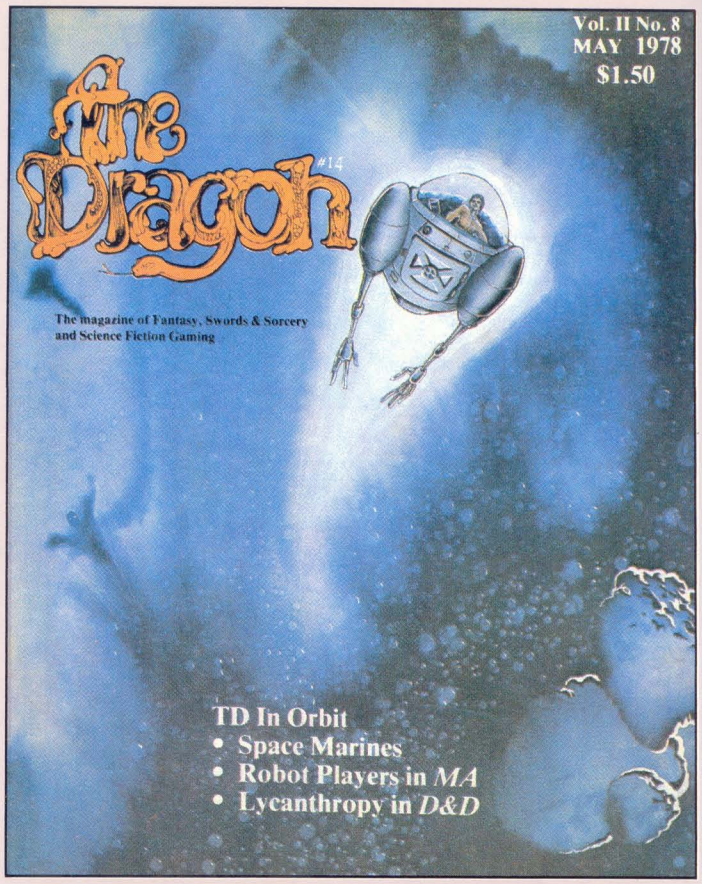
NO BOOK CAN TRULY TELL THE FANTASTIC STORY OF JASMINE. VERY FEW KNOW WHAT I KNOW—AND WHAT I KNOW IS STRANGE INDEED... GATHER QUICKLY FOR THIS TALE BEGINS AGES AGO WITH A YOUNG PRINCESS TRAVELLING CHEERFULLY TO HER DOOM!
WITH TREPIDATION HER RETAINERS ACCOMPANY HER INTO AN UNCERTAIN LAND...
"WE MUST TURN BACK— THIS IS TOTAL MADNESS!
"MADNESS—OR... ENCHANTMENT: BUT HOW? HOW COULD THAT SCHEMING PRINCE GET HER TO TRAVEL SO RELIGIOUSLY TO HIS BROODING FORTRESS?"
"EVERYTHING SHE SEES IS SO BEWILDERING AND BEAUTIFUL, I DOUBT WE CAN DISSUADE HER— BUT..."
THE CAPTAIN OF THE GUARD STOPS THE PROCESSION AND TRIES TO REASON WITH THE PRINCESS -- UNFORTUNATELY TOO LATE...



Toad's Cloak Armorsmith Shop, #95, by Dean Morrissey



Bill Hannon

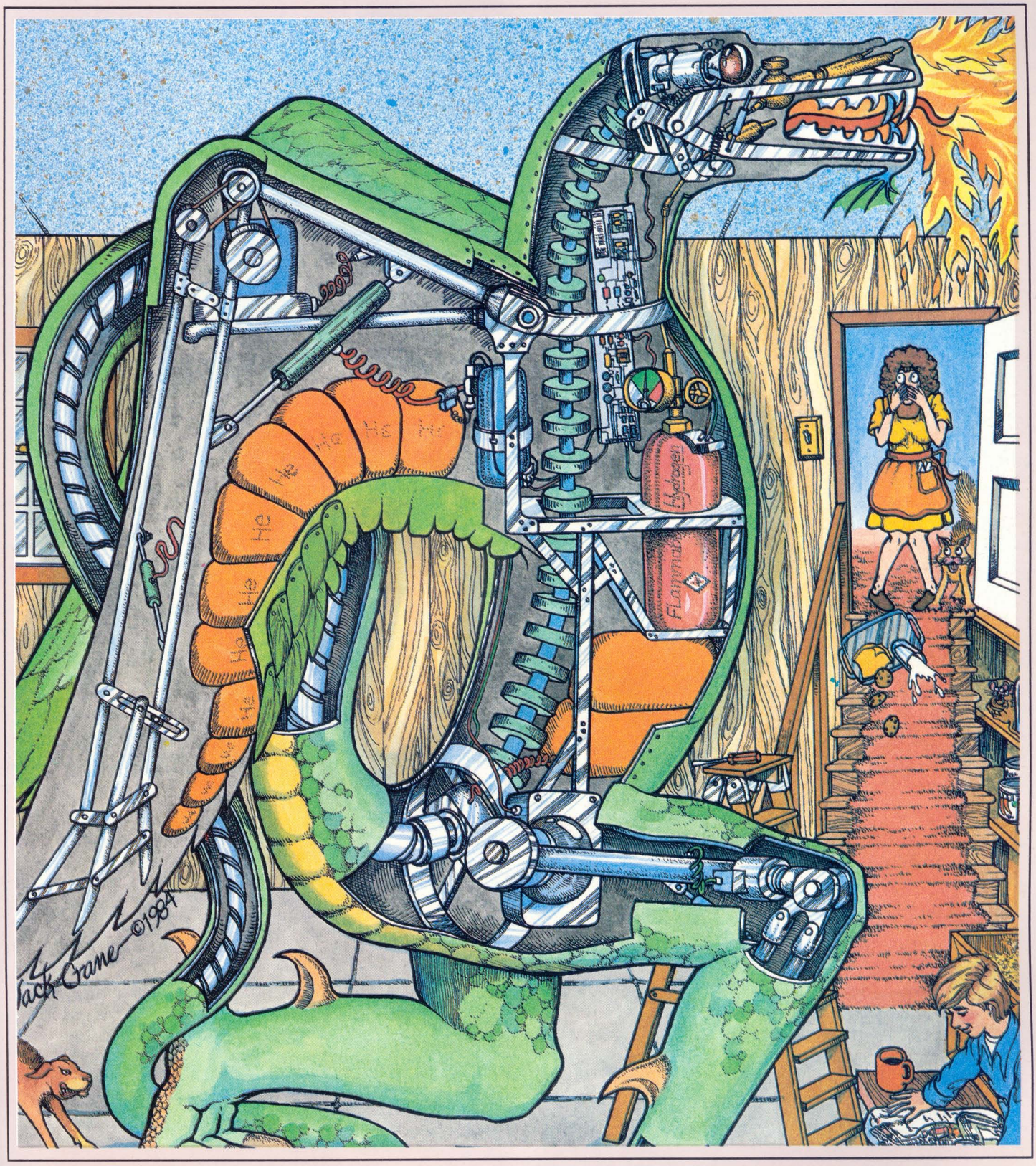


#14, Steve Oliff

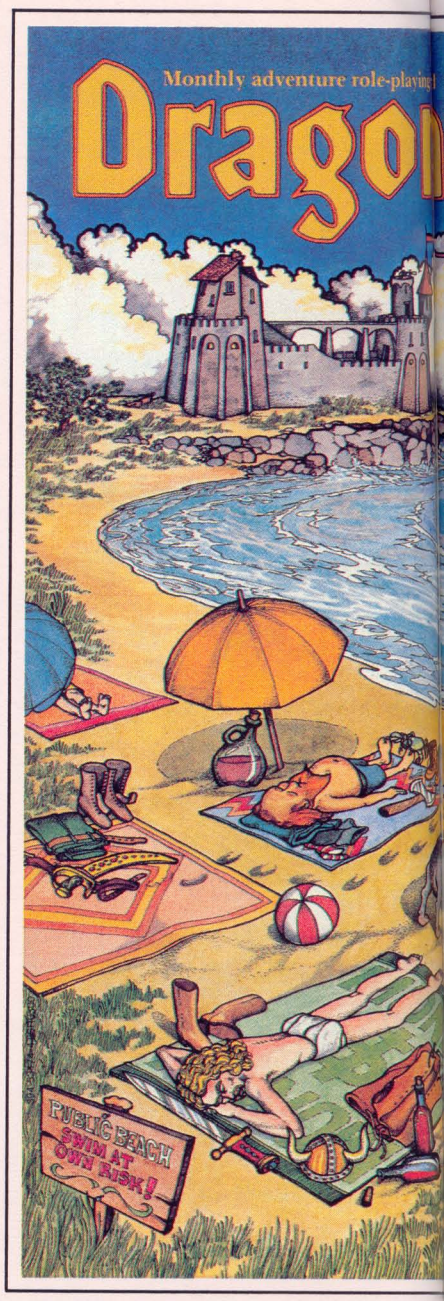
An Alien in a Strange Land, by Phil Foglio

Jim Holloway

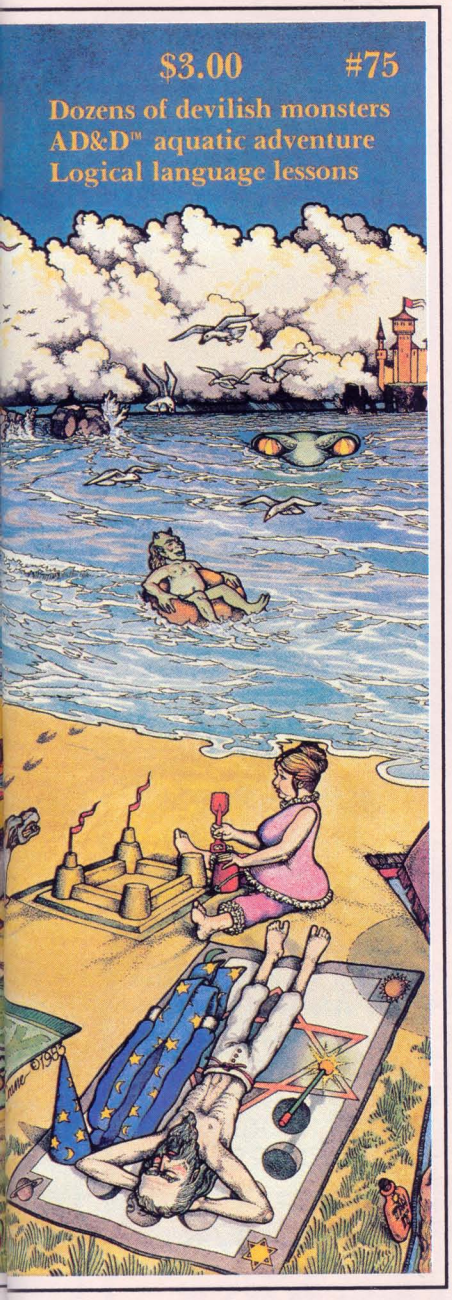
Humor

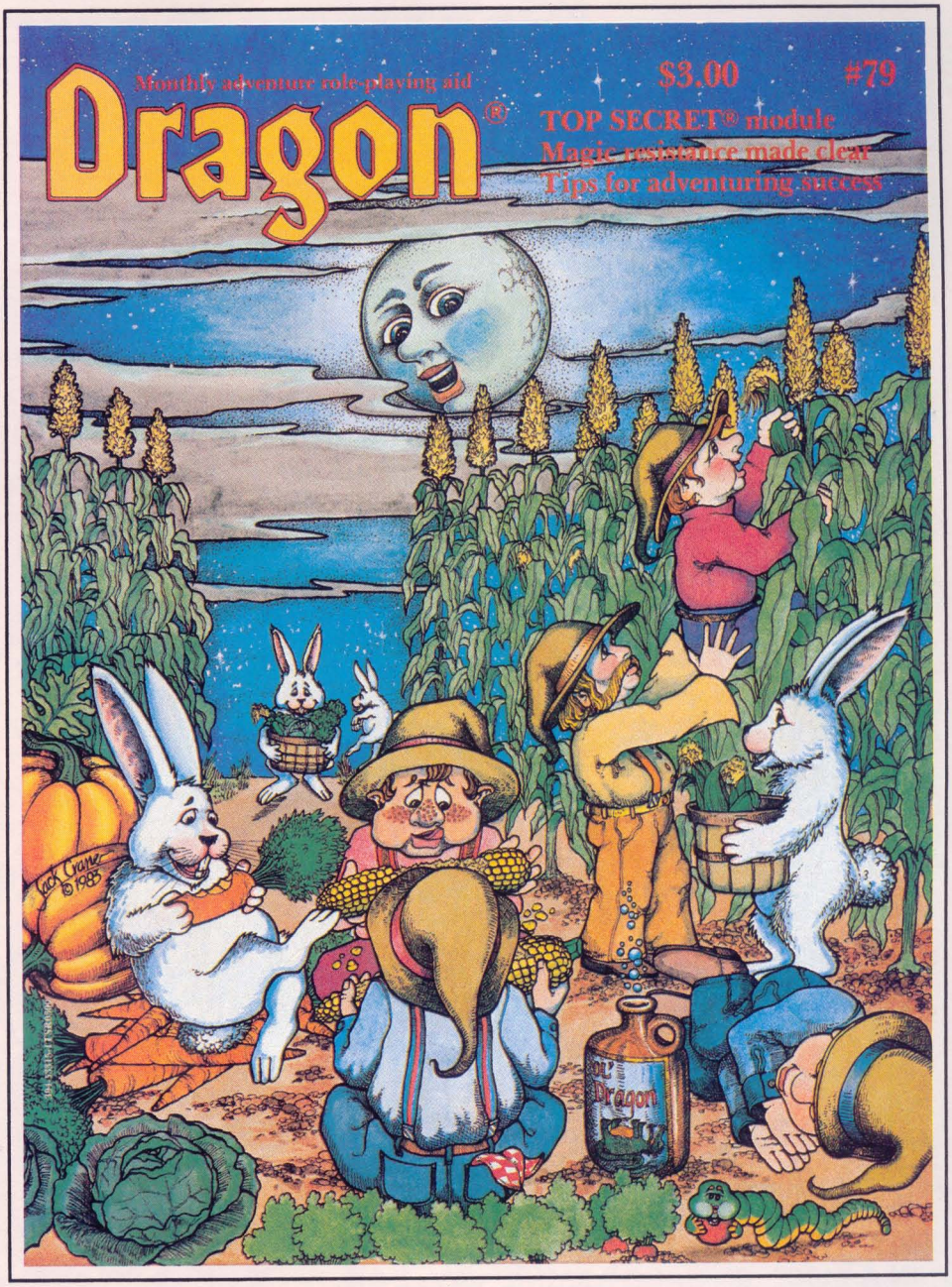


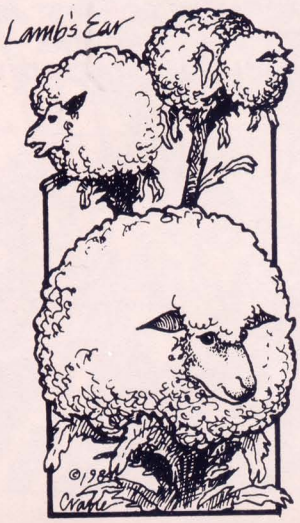
Andragon (Android Dragon), #96, Jack Crane

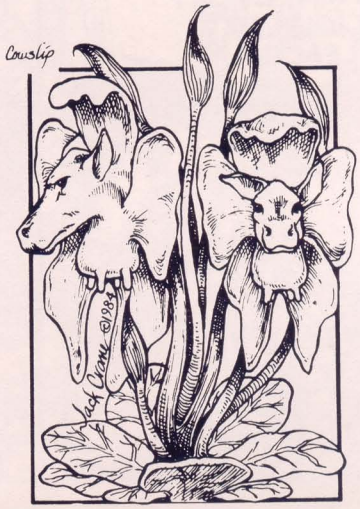


More of Jack Crane's whimsy:
Left—The Enchanted Forest, #87
Center—Summer landscape, #75
Right—Moonlight harvest, #79
Bottom of next page: Creatures from Crane's "Legacy of Hortus"—(from left) lamb's ear, cowslip, and foxglove


$3.00
#75
Dozens of devilish monsters
AD&D™ aquatic adventure
Logical language lessons


Monthly adventure role-playing aid
Dragon®
$3.00
#79
TOP SECRET® module
Magic resistance made clear
Tips for adventuring success
Jack Crane ©1985
Ol' Dragon


Lamb's Ear
©1984 Crane

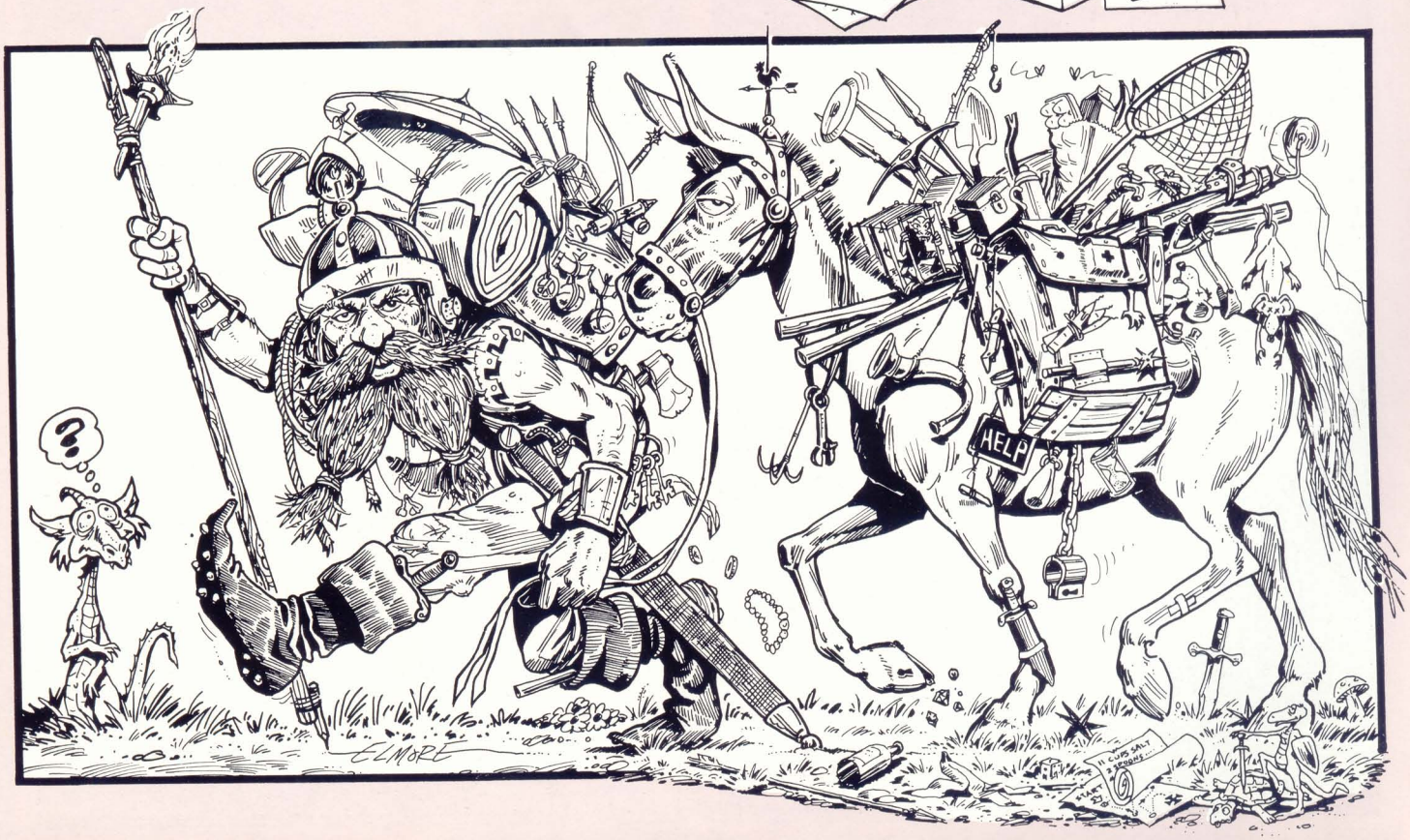

Cowslip
Jack Crane ©1984

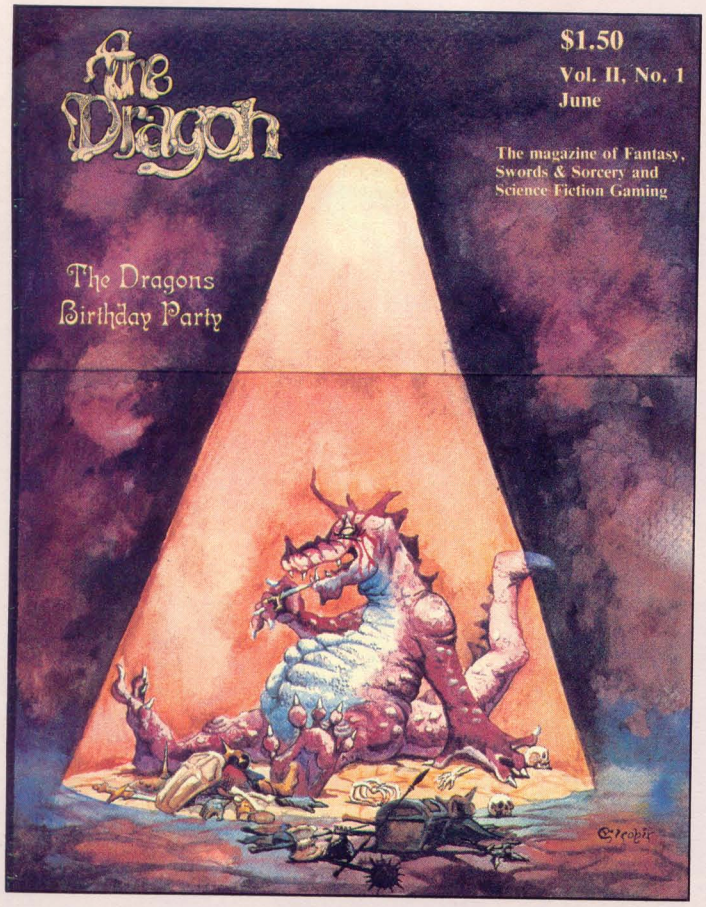
Foxglove
©1984 Crane

SNARF QUEST #1

BY ELMORE

Larry Elmore's article illustrations make points important for the game player with clarity and humor. *Below*—even the most creative dungeon master should be logical in his development of monsters. *Left*—A player must aim for realism in using archery. *Bottom*—Weapons alone will not get a character through an adventure; he must be ready for *anything!*

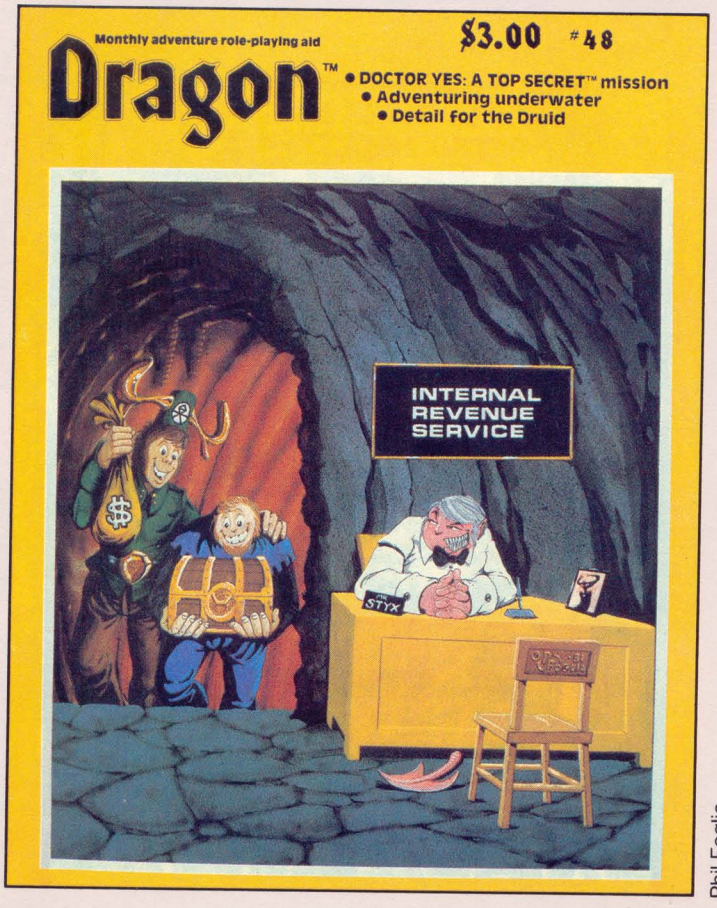




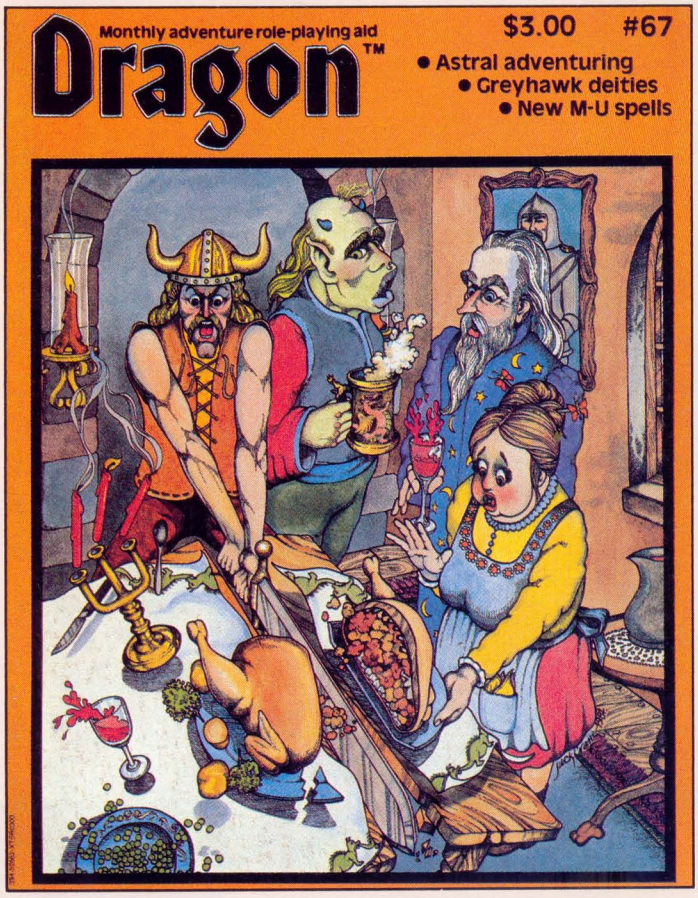
Elrohir

Jim Holloway

Phil Foglio

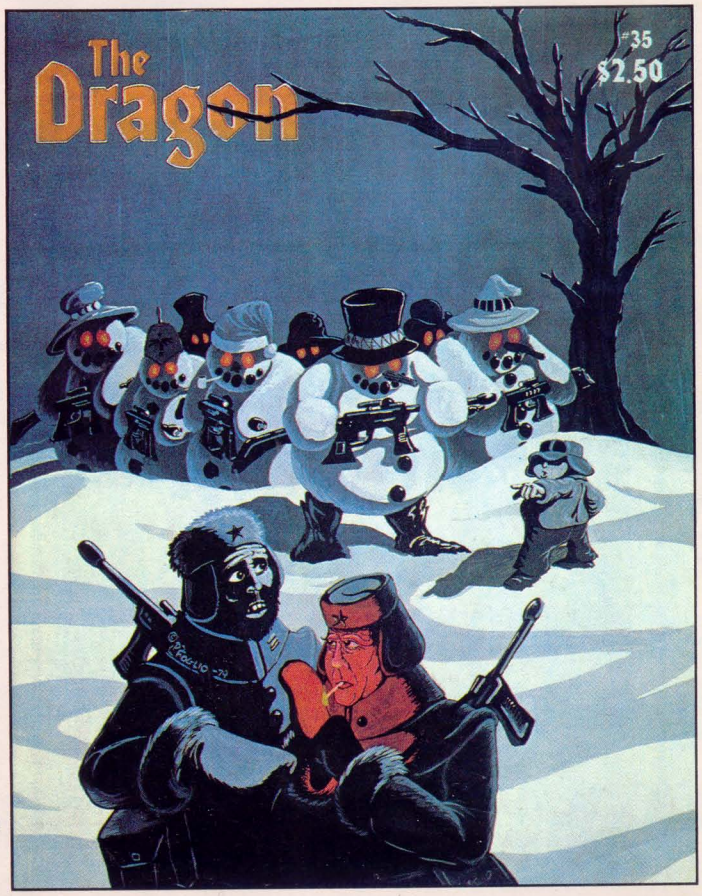


Phil Foglio



Jack Crane

Phil Foglio



Phil Foglio

Phil Foglio

Larry Elmore's humor in dealing with the demi-human races in the world of the DRAGONLANCE® saga reveal more about them than a straightforward portrait might.

Left—The kender, a race of "handlers" peculiar to Krynn, are unwelcome to the other races for their propensity for lifting others' possessions.

Below—The gully dwarves are also found exclusively on Krynn, but then no other world would want them.

Left—The gnomes of Krynn may be a race frequently found in AD&D® game adventures, but their inventions make their impact felt in the DRAGONLANCE® adventures.

Below—Dwarves, too, are important to the DRAGONLANCE story, but here Elmore shows the fantasy race venturing into a different realm, that of space and science fiction.

Inflato the Magnificent, by Phil Foglio, introducing a "full-blown" dragon section in the magazine

And as a final treasure, we end as we began on the cover, with a piece from the next ten years of DRAGON Magazine, which are already well under way. *The Barbarian in the Library,* by Valerie A. Valusek.

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